



# GRAD GUIDE

A Guidebook to Georgia Institute of Technology's  
Policies, Requirements, and Resources



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## The Value of a Graduate Degree

We live in a world that is increasingly knowledge intensive. Graduate education builds your knowledge base and gives you skills to earn and perform the best jobs the emerging global economy has to offer. A professional master's degree gives you specific skills and problem-solving experience for a targeted job market. A research master's opens the door to a wide range of occupations or further study. And a Doctor of Philosophy or Ph.D. prepares you to advance knowledge in academe, government, industry, or nonprofit organizations. Georgia Tech offers top-ranked programs of all these types. Welcome to your future.

## Understanding Georgia Tech's Organization

In some ways Georgia Tech is like other universities — and in other ways it differs. Here are a few things to know about how things are organized and operate at what we call the “Institute level” and at the graduate program level.

### Colleges and Schools

Georgia Tech is organized into six colleges (Design, Business, Computing, Engineering, Liberal Arts, and Sciences); five of these contain schools (the Scheller College of Business does not). What would be called a “department” at other universities is called a “school” at Georgia Tech. Each college is led by a dean and each school is led by a school chair.

### Programs

Graduate education at Georgia Tech is offered in programs, and currently more than 90 master's and doctoral-level programs are offered. Many schools offer more than one program. Some programs are offered within one school, and some programs are offered jointly by more than one school (we call these “interdisciplinary” programs). (Because many Georgia Tech schools are also interdisciplinary, this label understates the extent of interdisciplinary education at Tech.) A few programs are also offered jointly with other universities. The core of a program is its

curriculum — that is, the set of courses and other experiences students are required to complete in order to earn their degrees.

Each graduate program has been proposed by faculty and approved by the Institute Graduate Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Senate, and the [Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia](#). The official current version of each program's curriculum is available in the [Georgia Tech Catalog](#).

General rules and regulations regarding degree completion that apply to all students are also proposed by committees of the Faculty Senate and approved by that body. For example, the rule that, “Students completing both the bachelor's and master's in the same discipline at Georgia Tech may use up to six credit hours of graduate-level coursework in the major discipline for both degrees,” was adopted at the Institute level and applies to all students. The Georgia Tech Catalog is the official repository for all of these rules. We will discuss Institute-level curriculum, enrollment, and academic performance requirements later in this handbook.

### Advising Support

Graduate students receive academic advice and support from several different channels, including professional academic advisors, faculty advisors, and program directors. Academic advisors can provide students with day-to-day advice on class registration and degree requirements, negotiating policies, processes, forms, and different services and opportunities available to graduate students.

The student's individual faculty advisor provides professional and academic guidance that is discipline-specific, assists with developing a program of study for the student that matches the student's interests and fulfills the degree requirements, and helps the student negotiate professional opportunities. In many cases, the advisor supports the student through graduate research assistantships, oversees their thesis or dissertation hours, chairs the student's thesis or dissertation committee, and provides mentorship that can last throughout the student's career.

For more details, please review the [Mutual Expectations Document](#). The faculty member who is the program director provides students with general academic guidance, provides them information on the degree program, and helps to monitor their academic progress.

## Office of Graduate Studies

Georgia Tech does not have a Graduate School, which is something that is common at many universities. Instead, we operate on a network model with a few central services and many responsibilities carried out by the degree programs. The Institute-level [Office of Graduate Studies](#) provides central services that complement and connect what is provided by the programs.

When you applied to Georgia Tech, you received services from the Graduate Studies staff. This office provides information and customer services to applicants and to the programs as they make admission decisions.

After you were admitted, the Graduate Studies staff made sure your records were complete so that you could be allowed to enroll. In addition, they checked to make sure you were legally present in the state of Georgia. This is known as the [“lawful presence” requirement](#). (In accordance with University System of Georgia policy, students admitted to Georgia Tech must verify their lawful presence in the United States prior to enrollment.)

Once your records were complete and you were cleared for lawful presence, Graduate Studies transferred your file to the [Registrar's Office](#), which is responsible for maintaining the official academic record for students at Georgia Tech. If you are an international student, you also worked with the [Office of International Education](#) (OIE) to ensure you had the appropriate paperwork to obtain a visa. OIE continues to provide support services to international students once they are on campus, as well as others who want to study or work abroad.

Graduate students have a few Institute-level curricular requirements, including ethics training, qualifying exams, theses and dissertations, and minors. The Graduate Studies staff monitors

your completion of them, while the Registrar's Office handles all other degree-completion and enrollment issues. If you change your program (also known as your “major”), the approval process also goes through Graduate Studies.

When you have questions about Institute services, the Graduate Studies staff can answer them or direct you to the right office. For example, Graduate Studies can connect you to the many offices around campus that provide services to graduate students. (More information regarding these services is available in the last section of the Georgia Tech Resources section at the end of this guide.)

The Graduate Studies staff also implements the President's Fellowship Program and the National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship Program, along with several other fellowship programs that provide funding across units. (Most fellowships are awarded within schools; school staff handle these directly. More information about fellowships is offered later in the guide.)

## Getting Started

So, you've been accepted and are getting ready to begin your degree at Georgia Tech. What do you do next?

### Attend Orientation

Each school at Georgia Tech holds an orientation for new graduate students, and there is an Institute orientation, offered at a variety of times to match student schedules. Also, various service units hold their own orientations, including the Library, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and OIE. And every August, Graduate Studies hosts a GradExpo to introduce students to on-campus and off-campus organizations and businesses. For more information about orientation and GradExpo, click [here](#).

### Grad Groups

[Grad Groups](#) is Georgia Tech's extended orientation program for new graduate students. Navigating the nuances of graduate school can be challenging, so don't embark on this journey alone. Participants are organized into groups

of about 15 students from a variety of degree programs, academic interests, and cultural backgrounds. Each group is lead by a senior graduate student, which allows participants to tap into their group leader's valuable experience and leverage that for their own success.

## Register for Classes

One of your first responsibilities as a new graduate student is to activate your enrollment and register for classes for your first semester. This must be done by 4 p.m. on the Friday of the first week of class. The first time you register, you must complete the process through [Buzzport](#), but in the future, you can use another online system called "[OSCAR](#)." Official registration deadlines are available on the [Registrar's website](#). You will receive instructions on registering for later semesters at your official Georgia Tech email address. If you have any questions about how to register, you can ask the staff in your program or in the Registrar's Office. (You can learn more about what the Registrar's Office does in their [virtual orientation video](#).)

## Check Your Email

Most of your official communication from Tech comes through your Georgia Tech email address, along with news about campus events and services. You will find it essential as well as useful to check the mailbox for that email address regularly. In general, all of your professors will also use this email address as their primary form of communication with you. It is your responsibility to check the mailbox for this address. You can manage where this email address is delivered in [PASSPORT](#).

## Pay Your Bill

You will pay your bill at the [Bursar's Office](#). You should be getting information from them through your official Georgia Tech email about the status of your student account. See [their video](#) to learn more about this office.

## Provide Feedback

Tech aims to provide high-quality education in innovative ways ranging from integrated career development to make-your-own requirements programs. For example, we offer programs

for an Online Master of Science in Computer Science and an interdisciplinary Master's Degree in Analytics. We invest in the teaching skills of our faculty and rely on your feedback to help us reward the best. So that you can rate your classroom experience, we provide a [Course Instructor Opinion Survey](#) for each course at the end of each term. Please plan to use it for every course you take. In addition, rules governing grading and final exams are posted online. Report any violations [here](#).

## Know the Honor Code

In and out of the classroom, you are bound by the [Georgia Tech Honor Code](#), which was developed by students to maintain the integrity of the education process at Tech. We repeat it here, in full, from the Catalog.

### Section 1. Statement of Purpose

*The members of the Georgia Tech community believe the fundamental objective of the Institute is to provide the students with a high-quality education while developing in them a sense of ethics and social responsibility. We believe that trust is an integral part of the learning process and that self-discipline is necessary in this pursuit. We also believe that any instance of dishonesty hurts the entire community. It is with this in mind that we have set forth a student Honor Code at Georgia Tech.*

### Section 2. Objectives

*An Honor Code at Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. It specifically aims to accomplish the following:*

- *Ensure that students, faculty, and administrators understand that the responsibility for upholding academic honesty at Georgia Tech lies with them.*
- *Prevent any students from gaining an unfair advantage over other students through academic misconduct.*
- *Ensure that students understand that academic dishonesty is a violation of the profound trust of the entire academic community.*

- Clarify what constitutes academic misconduct among students at Georgia Tech and what is expected of them by the Institute, the faculty, and their peers.
- Cultivate an environment at Georgia Tech where academic dishonesty is not tolerated among the students.
- Secure a centralized system of education and awareness of the Honor Code.

### Section 3. Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. The immediate objective of an Honor Code is to prevent any students from gaining an unfair advantage over other students through academic misconduct. Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course.
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a student in the commission of academic requirements.
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism).
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant.
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit.
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a member of the faculty so as to obtain unearned academic credit.
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the student.

While these acts constitute assured instances

of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.

Students must sign the Honor Agreement affirming their commitment to uphold the Honor Code before becoming a part of the Georgia Tech community. The Honor Agreement may reappear on exams and other assignments to remind students of their responsibilities under the Georgia Institute of Technology Academic Honor Code.

### Section 4. Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty members are expected to create an environment where honesty flourishes. In creating this environment, faculty members are expected to do the following:

- Make known to their class as specifically as possible what constitutes appropriate academic conduct as well as what comprises academic misconduct. This includes but is not limited to the use of previously submitted work, collaborative work on homework, etc.
- Provide copies of old exams or lists of sample questions to the Georgia Tech Library for students to review.
- Avoid the re-use of exams.
- Include a paragraph containing information about the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code on the syllabus for each class they teach.
- Report instances of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students.

In addition to the expectations listed previously, faculty have the authority to superimpose their own interpretations on some aspects of academic conduct including, but not limited to, the following:

- Old exams for use during open-book exams.
- Contents of formula sheets allowed on exams.
- Use of calculators on exams.
- Collaboration on out-of-class assignments.
- Use of previously submitted out-of-class assignments.



## Understand Student-Faculty Expectations

Below is the statement of [Student-Faculty Expectations](#) from the Catalog. These are different expectations from those outlined for advisors/advisees in the [Mutual Expectations Document](#).

*The Georgia Institute of Technology believes that it is important to continually strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgment, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. Therefore, the Georgia Tech community strives here to enumerate the specific expectations of each side. However, this document is not intended to be either comprehensive or limiting in regard to the Institute's statutes. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, we remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech, agree to abide by these principles in our time here, and will encourage each other to uphold these responsibilities.*

### Student Expectations

*We hold that all students have the right to expect the following:*

- 1. A positive, respectful, and engaged academic environment inside and outside the classroom.*
- 2. To attend classes at regularly scheduled times without undue variations and without penalty if the student cannot attend instructional, lab, or examination hours not institutionally scheduled.*
- 3. To receive a syllabus that should include an outline of the course objectives, evaluation criteria, and any other requirements for successful completion of each course during the first week of class meetings and to be clearly informed of any changes made to the syllabus during the semester with reasonable time to adjust to these changes.*
- 4. To consult with faculty outside of usual classroom times through regularly scheduled office hours or a mutually convenient appointment.*
- 5. To have reasonable access to Institute*

*facilities and equipment in order to complete course assignments and/or objectives.*

- 6. To have reasonable time to learn course material prior to the administration of an examination.*
- 7. To receive a clear explanation of the faculty's definition and interpretation of academic misconduct within the course that extends over and beyond those clearly defined in the Georgia Tech Honor Code.*
- 8. To have reasonable access to grading instruments and/or grading criteria for individual assignments, projects, or exams, and to review graded material in a timely fashion.*
- 9. To consult with each course's faculty regarding the petition process for graded coursework.*
- 10. Faculty to adhere to formal Institute policies, rules and regulations, such as the Week Preceding Final Examinations Policy and the confidentiality policies of FERPA.*

### Faculty Expectations

*We hold that all faculty members have the right to expect the following:*

- 1. A positive, respectful, and engaged academic environment inside and outside the classroom.*
- 2. Students to appear regularly for class meetings in a timely fashion.*
- 3. To select qualified teaching assistants in accordance with departmental protocols as well as the right to delegate grading, studio and laboratory instruction, tutoring, and other academic activities to these individuals.*
- 4. Students to appear at office hours or a mutually convenient appointment for official matters of academic concern.*
- 5. Full attendance at examination, midterms, presentations, studios, and laboratories, with the exception of formal pre-approved excused absences or emergency situations.*
- 6. Students to be prepared for class, appearing with appropriate materials and having completed assigned readings and*



homework.

7. *Full engagement in the classroom, including meaningful focus during lectures, appropriate and relevant questions, and class participation.*
8. *To cancel class due to emergency situations and to cover missed material during subsequent class meeting times (at the discretion of the instructor).*
9. *Students to act with integrity and to adhere to the principles of the Georgia Tech Student Honor Code.*
10. *Students to adhere to formal Institute policies, such as the Student Code of Conduct.*

## Understand the Grievance Procedures

The Catalog, in its Rules and Regulations section, describes procedures that are meant to provide you with a way to set forth grievances related to [academic matters](#), including intellectual diversity and grade disputes (when you think that an instructor has acted unfairly or improperly in assignment of grades). Student concerns may be discussed with the faculty member and/or reported to the school or unit head, the academic deans, or the associate vice provost in the [Office of Graduate Education and Faculty Development](#).

The [grievance procedure](#) proceeds through the following steps:

1. Informal resolution attempted at the school, department, or unit level.
2. Formal resolution sought at the school, department, or unit level.
3. Formal resolution sought at the Institute level. Appeal reviewed and, if so determined, heard by the Student Grievance and Appeal Committee.

See the [Catalog](#) for full details.

Sometimes, students have nonacademic grievances regarding other aspects of life at Georgia Tech including pay or hours; respectful treatment from faculty, staff, or other students; ethical research practices; or sexual harassment. In general, if the complaint is

about a faculty member you should take it to the Office of Graduate Education and Faculty Development. If it is about a staff member, you should take it to the [Office of Human Resources](#). And if the complaint is about another student, you should take it to the [Dean of Students](#).

## Get Acquainted with the Division of Student Life

Georgia Tech has a whole division devoted to supporting you in your life outside your program. It's the [Division of Student Life](#). The office includes disability, diversity, veteran, and women's services, plus the [Counseling Center](#) (also described below under the "Thriving at Tech" section). You can seek assistance from the Office of the Dean of Students on any issue, and they will direct you to the right person on campus to help you. If you have complaints about how you are being treated by other students or want to report violations of the Honor Code, this is the office to contact.

## Join a Student Organization

One way to connect with other students and Georgia Tech is to join one of the many student organizations on campus. Here are a few to consider:

- **Graduate Student Government Association.** Students at Tech have organized their own governing body, the [Student Government Association](#) (SGA). One branch of SGA represents graduate students. They work to identify graduate student-specific issues, needs, or opportunities, and work with Institute administration and other partners to improve the graduate experience. They organize the Graduate Student Picnic and the Career, Research, and Innovation Development Conference.
- **Student Alumni Association.** The [Student Alumni Association](#) (SAA) enables students to connect with some of Georgia Tech's interesting and influential alumni. This is a special resource for meeting people who can offer advice and advocacy regarding your career plans. SAA organizes dinners with alumni in the area (the Dinner Jackets program) and links students to mentors.

Graduate students are a growing and active segment of this organization's membership.

- The world needs exemplary leaders. You may not fully realize or believe it, but you are fully capable of leading. With a growth mindset, you can create the conditions, inside yourself and in the context in which you live and work, to become a more dynamic leader than you are today. [Discover ways to challenge yourself to take your leadership to the next level.](#)
- **Other Student Organizations.** There are hundreds of professional, social, cultural, and/or political student organizations for you to join at Tech. These groups can provide much-needed breaks and opportunities to meet people outside of your department or lab. Student Organizations are managed through the [Office of Student Engagement](#) and the OrgSync system. For more information, click [here](#).

## Financial Resources

Finding funds to support yourself can be the biggest challenge of graduate study. Georgia Tech students generally accomplish this through their savings, assistantships, fellowships, loans, or off-campus jobs.

## Graduate Assistantships

About half of Georgia Tech's graduate students are employed as graduate research or teaching assistants (GRAs or GTAs), including four out of five doctoral students. The vast majority of GRA jobs are funded by grants or contracts that come from outside Tech. They provide hands-on research experience and usually an opportunity to learn teamwork. Most GTA jobs are paid from Georgia Tech operating funds (state funds). They provide an opportunity for students to develop teaching skills in apprenticeship with a member of the faculty.

In order to be hired as a GRA or GTA, you must be a full-time student. Some GRA assignments (and all GTA assignments) are easy to distinguish from a student's dissertation or thesis research. Many GRA assignments, however, consist of the same project that you

are pursuing as a thesis or dissertation. In this case, you must spend at least the specified number of hours per week (13-20) on the project to fulfill your work obligation. Any hours spent beyond these are considered your educational responsibilities and are under your control.

You should talk to your advisor about what is required to make adequate progress on your dissertation or thesis and earn a satisfactory grade in your thesis credits. The time spent to accomplish that level of achievement is at your discretion and can be allocated in any way you want over the space of the semester. If you are being asked to work on your GRA or GTA assignment more than 20 hours per week by your supervisor, you should ask the director of your graduate program to resolve that problem. If there is still a problem, contact the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development at [vpgefd@gatech.edu](mailto:vpgefd@gatech.edu).

Please review the rates of pay listed [here](#). If your pay rate is less than this, please report the violation first to the director of your program. If the issue is not resolved within your school, then report it to the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development. The pay scales for your school should be posted in a place where both graduate students and faculty can see them. All GRA and GTA positions are contingent on the availability of funds in the hiring unit.

There is a third category of assistantship, called "Graduate Assistantships" (GAs). This hiring method is available to a faculty member when he or she wants to hire a part-time student, when the job is limited, or when the student will be working for less than half a semester. A GA position does not provide a tuition waiver; the student must be registered and pay his or her tuition.

All of these assistantships are jobs, not financial aid. GRA/GTA work assignments are divided into three terms: fall (Aug. 16-Dec. 31), spring (Jan. 1-May 15), and summer (May 16-Aug. 15). If you have any questions about when you get paid, you can check the [Payroll website](#), or send an email to [pay.ask@ohr.gatech.edu](mailto:pay.ask@ohr.gatech.edu).

The only weekdays when GRAs, GTAs, or

GAs are not required to work are Institute holidays, which appear on the [Human Resources website](#). The breaks from classes — fall, winter, and spring breaks — are not official Institute holidays, and you are required to be available for work during those times. With your supervisor’s permission, your working hours may be averaged over the semester, and you may put in more hours in one part of the term in order to spend a few weeks away from campus at a time when classes are not in session. See the [policy on schedule flexibility](#) for GRAs and GTAs in the Policy Library.

**Fellowships**

Georgia Tech awards a large number of individual fellowships. They vary in value from a few hundred dollars to \$30,000 per year or more. Most of them are awarded by schools, not by the Office of Graduate Studies or the [Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid](#). Even for programs where several schools are eligible, nominations come from within the programs, not directly from individual students.

The only Institute-level fellowship programs are President’s Fellowships and Institute Fellowships. These supplement assistantships or other fellowships. Programs nominate incoming students for these programs. The Office of Graduate Studies administers the programs.

If you want to pursue other fellowship opportunities, contact the [Fellowships Office](#) for help with locating opportunities and preparing applications.

**Loans**

U.S. citizens and permanent residents are often eligible for special student loans. There are two federal direct loan programs for graduate students: the unsubsidized Direct Student Loan and the Graduate Plus Loan. To apply for a loan, students need to submit the “GT Application for Scholarships and Financial Aid” and the FAFSA. For more information, click [here](#).

**Off-Campus Employment Options**

Graduate students are welcome to join

Georgia Tech’s [Co-op Program](#), which places students into off-campus employment. If you are on a student visa, co-op is the only route to off-campus employment for you. You can work with your advisor on finding a time in your program when a work assignment might be appropriate.

The Co-op Program generally needs a semester’s advance notice to place you in a job, so start the process early. For example, if you are looking for a summer co-op, you should start looking the fall semester before.

Many graduate students work off campus while they are studying, but note that balancing coursework and a job can be challenging. The following guidelines may help you and your advisor determine the right course load for you if you are working outside Tech.

Work Load/Week	Max Semester Load
Full time (40 hours)	6 hours
3/4 full time (30 hours)	9 hours
2/3 full time (27 hours)	10 hours
1/2 full time (20 hours)	12 hours
1/3 full time (13 hours)	15 hours
1/4 full time (10 hours)	18 (16 summer) hours

The minimum course load for all students to maintain student status is three credit hours (see the section below on Enrollment Requirements for exceptions), and this applies to students working off campus as well. However, you and your advisor should plan for you to take as many courses as you can handle in order to move you toward your degree as quickly as possible.

**Out-of-State Tuition Waivers**

Tech is permitted to reduce tuition to in-state levels for a limited number of international and outstanding out-of-state students. But keep in mind, these waivers are granted only under extraordinary circumstances. Some special categories of students are eligible for these out-of-state tuition waivers automatically. (See the Board of Regents Manual [Section 7.3.4.1](#) for a list of eligible groups). Requests for these waivers are submitted through schools and programs on a form distributed once a semester



by the Office of Financial Aid.

## Policies

In this section, rather than repeat Georgia Tech's details rules and policies, we are providing you with an overview of where you can find information about policies that will affect graduate students. The first thing to know is that Tech has a central online [Policy Library](#). When it comes to important academic requirements (along with the general student rules and regulations), the [Georgia Tech Catalog](#) is the source. Tech's financial aid website is home to [policies on fellowships and loans](#). And the best source of information on the rules and procedures around theses and dissertations is the relevant section of the [Graduate Studies website](#).

When there are special circumstances, in many cases someone at Tech can make an exception to a rule. Appeals on academic matters go to the Institute Graduate Curriculum Committee (through a process called "[petitioning](#)"). The appeal process on financial aid is described on the [Financial Aid website](#). And exceptions to the rules on assistantships, minors, and theses/dissertations can be considered by the Office of Graduate Studies.

## Curriculum Requirements at the Institute Level

There are very few general curriculum requirements for graduate students at Georgia Tech. Most curriculum requirements are set within programs. The following Institute-level curriculum requirements apply to doctoral students:

- Doctoral students must complete two forms of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training. See the [RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students](#) for details.
- Doctoral students must complete a three-course/nine-hour [minor](#), approved by their programs and the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Doctoral students must take qualifying examinations as set by their programs.

- Doctoral students must complete a dissertation. (See the [Graduate Studies website](#) for details and the Guidelines for Ph.D. Dissertation Research section below.)

Master's students pursuing a thesis must also complete RCR training before seeking approval for their thesis topic. See the [RCR Academic Policy for Master's Thesis Students](#) for details.

## RCR Training Under NSF and NIH Grants

Along with the graduate curriculum requirements for RCR training, graduate students supported by applicable projects funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) or the National Institutes of Health (NIH) must also complete RCR training. These compliance requirements, which may not be the same as the doctoral or master's curriculum requirements, must be completed in order to comply with government regulations. See the [RCR Compliance Policy](#) for details.

## Enrollment Requirements

There are many enrollment policies that apply to graduate students; the current versions of these appear in the [Catalog](#). Here are some particularly important points:

- Full-time status requires that you register for 12 credit hours on a letter grade or pass-fail basis. Audit credits do not count toward full-time status. Full-time status is particularly important for fellowship holders and for international students, since their visas depend on maintaining it. The Institute allows only three credit hours taken on a pass-fail basis to count toward a graduate degree.
- Once you register, you should plan to maintain continuous registration until you graduate. If you fail to register for two consecutive semesters, you lose your student status and must go through the [readmission process](#). You will have to pay a readmission fee. The minimum number of credit hours for which you must register in a given term in order to maintain your student status is three. There is one exception: the term in which you graduate, when you may

enroll for just one credit hour. This exception may be used only once for each degree.

- While you are working on your thesis or dissertation, you must register for an appropriate number of credit hours to reflect the work you are doing in your assignment. This rule applies in all three semesters. Even if you are not taking classes in the summer, if you are getting advice from your advisor or using our facilities (including distance access to software and information services), you must be registered.
- See above for guidelines on enrollment if you are working off campus.
- If you have completed all degree requirements and will no longer require any of the Institute's facilities or faculty time, you may request an enrollment waiver from [Office of Graduate Studies](#).

### Academic Performance Requirements

In order to graduate, in addition to satisfying all school academic requirements, master's students must have an overall GPA of at least 2.70, and doctoral students must have an overall GPA of at least 3.0. Some schools may require a higher overall GPA for certain segments of program requirements. A grade of D is acceptable for course work to be considered completed, but individual programs may require grades of C or higher if they choose. All of these requirements will be enforced when you apply to graduate.

In addition, all graduate students must have an overall GPA of at least 3.0 to be eligible for financial aid (including fellowships and loans) from Georgia Tech. (See the [Satisfactory Academic Progress portion](#) of the Office of Financial Aid website.) The maximum time frame for graduate students to receive financial aid is six semesters for master's students and 12 semesters for doctoral students.

### Thesis and Dissertation Requirements

Many master's students write a thesis as part of their degree requirements. All doctoral students write a dissertation to complete their degrees. The best place to go for detailed instructions on completing both requirements

is <http://www.grad.gatech.edu/theses-dissertations>. This section of the guide provides only a summary of the main points. There are Institute-level rules regarding both the faculty committees that evaluate these documents and the substance and format of the documents. In addition, programs may have their own rules, but they do not override the Institute rules. Both must be followed.

Committees for master's theses must include three members, including at least two tenured or tenure-track Georgia Tech faculty members. Dissertation proposals are approved by a thesis advisory committee with a majority of tenured or tenure-track faculty members, and final dissertations are approved ("examined") by a five-member group that includes the thesis advisory committee and must include at least one tenured or tenure-track Georgia Tech faculty member from outside the student's school. In degree programs that are offered jointly with another institution, the committee must include members from both institutions. The committees must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development.

All theses and dissertations must be submitted for open publication. The current requirement is to deposit them in the [SMARTech Repository](#) at Tech's Library. If you request (and your advisor agrees), your thesis or dissertation can be withheld from appearance online for one year. If you are working on research that is proprietary or classified, you and your advisor should choose parts of it for your thesis or dissertation that can be published openly within one year of completion.

### Guidelines for Ph.D. Dissertation Research

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you conduct your dissertation research.

- Doctoral research should provide a useful educational experience for the student, emphasizing creativity, independent action and learning, research methodology, and scholarly approach.
- The contributions to knowledge must be original and should represent a substantial

addition to the fundamental knowledge of the field or a new and better interpretation of facts already known.

- The research should possess the major characteristics of the scientific method, namely objectivity and reproducibility. Assumptions should be clearly stated in both experimental and theoretical research.
- The dissertation should reflect a level of competence indicative of significant achievement beyond the master's level. Thus, the research is expected to draw directly upon advanced learning in the student's major field and demonstrate mastery of that knowledge.
- The research should result in at least one paper publishable in a suitable refereed journal of engineering, science, social science, humanities, management, or architecture, as appropriate.
- The scope of the research should be such that it requires at least the time and effort equivalent to one year of full-time graduate study.

## Thriving at Tech

Graduate study requires intensive work. You will need breaks from the intensity. Be sure to make time for your family, and build recreation into your schedule. Get to know your fellow graduate students by taking advantage of the growing number of opportunities for students to meet students outside of their research groups, outside of their programs, and outside of their colleges. A great start is the Graduate Student Picnic, which is usually held in September. A third of the students on campus are graduate students like you. You have a lot to share, if you take the time to make the connections. [Health Promotion](#) is another great resource to utilize on campus. This department focuses on empowering students to make healthy decisions and provides resources and support on a variety of topics including: smoking cessation, sexual violence victim-survivor advocacy, nutrition, condom availability, and more.

## Dealing with Pressure

Some of the pressures of graduate study are

more intense than anything you experienced as an undergraduate. The stakes are higher with regard to your thesis or dissertation. Your qualifying exams are make-or-break moments. Your relationship with your advisor is crucial, but not all advisors and advisees communicate well.

Tech can't design these moments of pressure out of your graduate work, but we do provide some places where you can talk about issues and get support. Your advisor can be a tremendous help, so if your relationship is good, tell him or her about the stress you're experiencing. Advisors have been through it many times before with other students, and they often have helpful advice for you.

You can also talk to the director of your graduate program or another person in a leadership position in your school. If the faculty director seems too intimidating, a graduate coordinator or academic advisor might be a good choice for you.

There are also the following sources of help outside your school or program:

- An [ombuds](#) specifically for graduate students. (An ombuds is a neutral person outside your program who helps resolve conflicts.)
- The [Counseling Center](#) is always available to help you.

Just as you are experiencing stress in graduate school, others around you are too. If you see someone who needs help, point them toward these resources, and share your concern with your graduate director or another trusted staff member. By connecting your colleagues to help, you could be making more of a difference than you know.

Sometimes what you feel as stress is actually caused by inappropriate behavior on the part of a faculty or staff member. Please report a situation like this. Usually, reporting to your school chair can resolve it. But if you are not satisfied with the outcome of that discussion, you can also report the problem to [academicgrievance.provost.gatech.edu](mailto:academicgrievance.provost.gatech.edu), [vpgefa@gatech.edu](mailto:vpgefa@gatech.edu), or the [Employee Relations](#) staff in the Office of Human Resources. If you



think something illegal has happened, you may report it directly to Georgia Tech's [Office of Internal Audit](#).

## Commitment to Diversity

At Georgia Tech, we are committed to providing a positive experience for all of our students. According to the Institute's [strategic plan](#):

*We will recruit, develop, retain, and engage a diverse cadre of students, faculty, and staff with a wide variety of backgrounds, perspectives, interests, and talents, creating a campus community that exemplifies the best in all of us — in our intellectual pursuits, our diversity of thought, our personal integrity, and our inclusive excellence."*

For more about the Institute's stance on diversity, visit the [Office of the Vice President for Institute Diversity website](#).

## Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

The Institute does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status in the administration of admissions policies, educational policies, employment policies, or any other Institute-governed programs and activities. The Institute's equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policy applies to every member of the Institute community.

## Sexual Harassment/Assault

Discriminatory harassment of any person or group of persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status is prohibited. Any employee, student, student organization, or person privileged to work or to study at the Georgia Institute of Technology who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including permanent exclusion from the Institute.

This policy is intended to facilitate an atmosphere in which faculty, staff, and students have the right to raise the issue of discriminatory harassment without fear of retaliation, and to

ensure that violations are fully remedied. No member of the of the Georgia Tech community will be retaliated against for making a good faith report of alleged harassment or for participating in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing. Learn more about the [VOICE](#) initiative on campus.

Discriminatory harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct directed against any person or group that is based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status, and that has the purpose or effect of creating an offensive, demeaning, or intimidating environment for that person or group of persons.

Acts of sexual violence, which include sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence are forms of sexual misconduct and are prohibited by Georgia Tech's [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and [Anti-Harassment Policy](#). For more information about sexual violence prevention and survivor support resources at Georgia Tech, please visit the [VOICE](#) website. We believe that all students, faculty, and staff have the right to live, learn, and work at Georgia Tech, free of violence or the threat of violence.

## Disability Services

Georgia Tech resources are available to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to pursue education or employment and have access to campus programs, activities, or services. For more information, students may visit the [Office of Disability Services](#) website. Or, if you are working at the Institute and need assistance with your normal job functions, visit [www.ohr.gatech.edu/ers/disability](http://www.ohr.gatech.edu/ers/disability).

## LGBTQIA Resource Center

Through outreach, education, and advocacy, this center works to create a safe, inclusive, and accessible campus community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual students, and their allies. For more, visit <http://lgbtqia.gatech.edu>.

## OMED

This unit is focused on the retention, development, and performance of the complete student learner who is traditionally underrepresented including African American, Hispanic, and Native American students. For more, visit <http://omed.gatech.edu/redux>.

### **Veterans Resource Center**

The center promotes student learning and development, and supports degree completion for students who are veterans, military, reservist, guard members, and dependents by providing comprehensive support services that enhance and complement the academic experience. For more, visit <http://veterans.gatech.edu>.

### **Title IX Compliance**

At Georgia Tech, we want everyone to achieve their potential, and this means sustaining an environment where there is equal opportunity for excellence. [Title IX](#) is a federal law designed to ensure women and men are provided equal access to programs and activities at educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Our policies and practices are anchored in this law, which fosters a culture of inclusivity on campus and provides everyone with a competitive and successful academic or employment experience.

Every member of the Tech community — students, faculty, staff, and administrators — is expected to comply with Title IX and to practice respectful, ethical, and equitable treatment of others regardless of their sex. Examples of areas covered under Title IX include, but are not limited to academics, admissions, athletics, benefits, employment/compensation, housing, pregnancy/childcare, recruitment, and sexual misconduct.

### **Women's Resource Center**

Since 1998, this center has provided a gathering place for women, offering programming, crisis intervention, and resource information on a variety of topics. For more, visit [www.womenscenter.gatech.edu](http://www.womenscenter.gatech.edu).

### **Office of International Education**

If you are an international student attending Tech on an F-1 or J-1 visa, you will work closely

with International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), a subgroup in the OIE. Once you are accepted to a Tech graduate program, ISSS will be available to help you with everything from serving as your resource on campus about your student immigration status to offering diverse cultural, educational, and leadership opportunities in order for you to make a well-integrated transition to Georgia Tech and the United States. For more, visit [www.oie.gatech.edu](http://www.oie.gatech.edu).

## **Graduation**

The most wonderful moment of your graduate career is the graduation ceremony or [commencement](#), as it signals the beginning of your life with your new degree. Georgia Tech holds graduation ceremonies in May and December. Don't skip yours! Your family deserves to celebrate with you (and it's webcast to accommodate family and friends who can't be there). You deserve to walk across the stage, get lots of pictures, and wear the regalia you have earned. We'll see you there!

## **Georgia Tech Resources**

Here's a list of campus resources that may be helpful. If you have any questions, visit the [Office of Graduate Studies](#) website or call 404-385-1940.

### **Athletics**

- [Intercollegiate Athletics](#). The Georgia Tech Athletic Association sponsors varsity intercollegiate athletics competition in a number of sports. Men's sports include football, basketball, baseball, golf, and tennis, while women's sports include basketball, softball, tennis, and volleyball.
- [Intramural Sports](#). Intramural Sports offer a wide variety of athletic competition. The Campus Recreation Center is the base for intramural activities. Other facilities include Alumni Park and the Roe Stamps Turf Field.

### **Campus Life**

- [Arts@Tech](#). An initiative to enhance the Tech

community by fostering programs and events spanning the arts spectrum.

- [Barnes & Noble at Georgia Tech](#). Tech's main campus bookstore, which is located in Tech Square.
- [Bursar's Office](#). Where you go to pay your tuition and fees.
- [BuzzCard](#). Your BuzzCard student ID is your campus passport, library card, facilities access key, and can even be loaded with money to use at restaurants/dining halls across campus.
- [Council for GradLife](#). A group of both undergraduate and graduate students whose mission is to bring the grad community together through exciting programs throughout the year.
- [Dean of Students](#). Provides a number of services to assist students with medical and personal emergencies.
- [Degree Program Coordinators](#). Listing of all degree program coordinators.
- [E-Swag](#). Show your Tech spirit by downloading everything from wallpaper for your tablet to ringtones for your cell phone — all available for free on this site.
- [Financial Aid](#). Place to go for assistance with applying for student loans.
- [Graduate Student Government Association](#). The governing body for graduate students at Georgia Tech.
- [Housing](#). Takes care of all of your on-campus housing needs.
- [Emergency Housing](#). Offers temporary housing to students who unexpectedly become displaced or under financial distress.
- [Klemis Kitchen](#). Serves as a food pantry for students with dietary needs and financial concerns that limit access to proper nourishment.
- [Library](#). This page provides information specifically for graduate students about Tech's main library.
- [Parking and Transportation Services](#). All the need-to-know information about everything from getting a parking permit to riding the

campus bus.

- [Policy Library](#). All official Georgia Tech policies are listed on this site.
- [Registrar](#). Handles anything from course registration to student records.
- [Strategic Plan](#). What you need to know about Tech's 25-year strategic plan.
- [Student Center](#). Located in the middle of campus, the Student Center is home to everything from places to eat to a bowling alley (Tech Rec).
- [Tech Lingo](#). A list of common words and phrases that are unique to Georgia Tech.
- [Tobacco-Free Georgia Tech](#). A resource for navigating Tech's tobacco-free campus policy.
- [Traditions](#). Get to know a little bit about Georgia Tech's rich traditions.

## Career

- [Campus Closet](#). Lends appropriate clothing and business attire to students.
- [Center for Career Discovery and Development](#). Supports graduate students with career support and finding co-op program options.
- [Center for Teaching and Learning](#). Provides training on effective teaching practices for graduate teaching assistants.
- [Communication Center](#). Provides assistance with papers and presentations.
- [Fellowships](#). Assists with finding and applying for fellowship opportunities.
- [Language Institute](#). Helps international students improve English skills.

## Child Care

- [R. Kirk Landon Learning Center](#). Located at 1015 Tumlin St., off of 10th Street in Midtown Atlanta, this center offers early education for children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. The center also offers school holiday vacation care and summer camps.



- [The Children's Campus @ Georgia Tech.](#) Tech's newest center is the Children's Campus @ Georgia Tech, located in Building F of the graduate student housing. This center offers education for children 6 weeks to 5 years old.

## Communications

- [Campus Calendar.](#) The central calendar for all Georgia Tech events.
- [Daily Digest.](#) Daily campuswide e-newsletter that includes events and news.
- [The Grad Word.](#) A monthly e-newsletter with info on events, news, and issues that impact graduate students.
- [Social Media Directory.](#) List of links to Tech's main social media channels.
- [GreenBuzz.](#) A site that highlights everything related to sustainability initiatives at Tech.
- [The Technique.](#) Tech's student newspaper.

## Health and Wellness

- [Campus Recreation Center.](#) From a world class aquatics facility to a state-of-the-art fitness center, the Campus Recreation Center (CRC) offers aerobics, martial arts classes, intramural sports, sport clubs, and much more.
- [Counseling Center.](#) Offers assistance with stressful situations.
- [Dean Griffing Hip Pocket Fund.](#) Offers interest-free emergency loans to students for academic or personal matters.
- [Health Services.](#) Provides medical and dental care and services for students.
- [SHIP.](#) Student Health Insurance Program.
- [Health Promotion.](#) Empowers students to make healthy decisions and provides resources and support on a variety of topics including: smoking cessation, sexual violence victim-survivor advocacy, nutrition, condom availability, and more.

## Safety

- [Georgia Tech Police Department.](#) A fully operational, state certified law enforcement agency devoted to the protection of the

campus community.

- [Office of Emergency Preparedness.](#) Focused on helping the Institute reduce the effects of disasters through preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities.
- [VOICE.](#) Georgia Tech's sexual violence prevention and survivor support initiative in the Office of Health Promotion. Learn more about prevention education, opportunities to get involved, and resources for support. Victim-Survivor Advocates are confidential and available 24/7 to assist students who have experienced any form of sexual violence.
- [Leadership Education and Development.](#) Offers a thoughtful and intentional series of academic, experiential, and co-curricular opportunities to help students prepare for leadership in a rapidly evolving global society.