The department expects the PhD student to demonstrate core competency in Aerospace Engineering by passing a doctoral qualifying exam and maintaining a 3.0 or better GPA.

- **Aerospace Fundamentals Qualifying Exam - AFQE**: A three-day exam held each year in mid-May. Must pass the AFQE to continue to PhD; change to MS or leave if not passed. To prepare for the AFQE, three courses are recommended: AERO 602, AERO 603, AERO 622.

- **Degree Plan and Committee Formation**: Begin in 2nd semester (usually Spring), complete in 3rd semester (following AFQE). Graduate faculty: Chair plus two other AERO faculty members and one from outside the department.

- **Sign up for the AERO Graduate Student Listserv and computer lab access**. See the registration button “Graduate Listserv” on the Department’s “Current Students” webpage (http://engineering.tamu.edu/aerospace/current-students); follow instructions for computing lab access (http://engineering.tamu.edu/aerospace/about).

- **Attend five (5) Aerospace Engineering Special Seminars** each semester.

### Steps to accomplish the Aerospace Engineering Fundamentals Qualifying Exam

- Register for the exam in January - Graduate Advisor sends form by email.
- Attend departmental AFQE Informational meeting.
- AFQE given M-W-F in mid-May. 9:00 a.m. - noon each day.
- Results should be available in June. A pass is required to continue in PhD.

### Degree Plan

For TAMU degree plan requirements in the Graduate Student Catalog go to: http://catalog.tamu.edu/ and use the search function to select Doctor of Philosophy program. Or, from the howdy portal (https://howdy.tamu.edu), select the Graduate Student Tab, then Degree Plan Submission System and Information (or Degree Requirements for catalog requirements checklist.)

- **Department requires 4 hours of AERO 681-Seminar** on the degree plan; take one during first semester in doctoral program. (Seminar only offered fall and spring terms).
- **Degree plan will have 64 hours coursework following the Master of Science Thesis Option (MS-THO) or 96 hours following the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree**. (no more / no less). Complete the degree plan online form at https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu or from the link on the Graduate tab in howdy. Discuss coursework with your faculty chair; include the recommended AFQE courses. It is common to have more research hours.

- Research hours are listed as a single total on one line in the degree plan.

Note: additional course or research hours may be taken but do not include in the degree plan. TAMU has limits on how many additional hours beyond 99 can be used without incurring nonresident tuition rates. PhD coursework expires after 10 years.

### Year 2

In the second year of a doctoral program, the department has these expectations:

- **Preliminary Exam**: Students demonstrate an understanding of the PhD research process by writing and successfully defending their research proposal in the Preliminary Exam.

- **Research Proposal**: Committee and student determine research goals and sign the Research Proposal form (attach entire proposal for your dissertation). Form at: http://ogaps.tamu.edu/incoming-students/student-forms-and-information/getting-a-degree/doctoral-degree-requirements/)

Note: Degree plan must be approved by OGAPS 90 days prior to the Prelim Exam and Research Proposal must be given to Committee two weeks prior to the Preliminary Exam.

- **Academic Calendar and Office of Graduate and Professional Studies Calendar deadlines must be followed.**


### Preliminary Exam

- Type and print the Preliminary Exam and Checklist Forms and schedule the Prelim with your Committee. Forms: http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students. Take any written tests required by your Committee no more than 3 days prior to the test date.


### Research Proposal

Research Proposal Title Page for Dissertation Form: (http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students). Student provides a draft of the proposal to the Committee 15 working days before the Prelim; Advisory Committee gives guidance on future research effort as part of a pass decision at the Prelim.
## Year 3 & 4

### Overview
Complete approved research, compile research results and develop conclusions in professional publications, conferences and dissertation. Final oral exam (Final Defense) will be scheduled, dissertation completed, submitted to Committee 15 working days prior to defense, defense must be successfully passed.

| Research | Schedule frequent meetings with advisor to discuss your progress and receive guidance. |
| Writing & Presenting Skills | Technical writing and observation/participation in seminar help: Prepare professional quality publications, make engaging professional presentations. |
| Academic Experience | Teaching/mentoring experience available to all doctoral students and can be enhanced for those definitely interested in an academic career. |
Observe deadlines for OGAPS, Thesis Office and Department, obtain required forms, including document template, copyright form, publication release form, complete doctoral survey, and information on ordering library-bound copies of dissertation for department.  
NOTE: Department requirement—Provide a substantially complete document to your Committee at least 15 days prior to Final Defense. |
| Final Defense or Final Oral Exam | • Complete (type) and download the Request & Announcement of the Final Examination from OGAPS: [http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students](http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students).  
• Arrange a date that all your committee can attend your defense, reserve a conference room, complete the form, bring to the AERO Graduate Advisor, 750 HRBB, for departmental approval.  
• Request department template to announce the defense 2 weeks prior to defense.  
• After the defense, your professor will return the result form to the Graduate Advising Office, 750 HRBB for approval and copy, then it is forwarded to OGAPS in 112 ADMN.  

### Graduation
Apply to graduate during the first week of your final semester at: [http://graduation.tamu.edu/](http://graduation.tamu.edu/). Order hood, cap and gown if attending graduation. Let your Chair know that you wish to be hooded by him or her.

| Exit Interview Form | Complete and return the Exit Interview Form to the Graduate Advisor, 750 HRBB. Stop by the Advising office for one or request it to be sent to you by email. |
| Reception & Graduation | Attend the AERO Graduation Celebration hosted in Aerospace Engineering; invite family and friends. Attend the TAMU graduation ceremony at Read Arena. Congratulations! |