

African & African- American Studies

University of Kansas

A Handbook for Graduate Students



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Introduction

We are where Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East meet.

Founded in 1970, the Department of African and African-American Studies seeks to educate students to function in a multicultural environment and in a global community. The objective of the Master of Arts program in African and African-American Studies at the University of Kansas is to produce scholars, teachers, administrators, and other professionals who have the intellectual and scholarly capacity and skills to make ongoing contributions to the world in which they live. Our graduate program encourages students to adopt a critical perspective requiring an integrative approach to the study of history, politics, economics, the arts, languages, culture, anthropology, and geography that does not abstract them from their political and social contexts, but rather relocates them within the social and political contexts from which they developed. Students are required to focus not only on the experiences of Africans and African-Americans, but also on the links of those experiences to the cultural, political, and economic forces of the larger world to which Africans and African-Americans have been, and are, inextricably connected. To this end, educators, journalists, the military, administrators, law enforcement agents, and other professionals who wish to function more effectively and efficiently in a connected, multicultural and global world will find our M.A. program accommodating and educative.

Unit Structure

Administration

Shawn Leigh Alexander (Ph.D., University of Massachusetts – Amherst) is the Department Chair, a Professor of African and African-American Studies and Courtesy Professor of History. His research focuses on African- American social and intellectual history, and his areas of teaching interest include Black intellectual thought, civil rights and African-American social and cultural history. He is well-published and has held teaching positions at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst College, Gettysburg College, and Yale University (where he was the first Cassius Marcellus Clay Fellow). He is also the Director of the Langston Hughes Center (LHC).

Peter Ojiambo (Ph.D., University of Ohio) is the Director of Graduate Studies and an Associate Professor of African and African-American Studies. His fields of teaching, research, and publication include Kiswahili and African languages; African-centered educational biographies; comparative and international education; educational leadership; democracy, poverty and development; non-Western educational thought; educational administration, curriculum, teaching, learning and relational theories; school and society relations. Dr. Ojiambo has held teaching positions at Ohio University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Meghan Allen – Office Manager (mmallen@ku.edu, (785) 864-9610, 9 Bailey Hall)
Meghan acts as office manager, scheduling officer, and point of contact for faculty, staff and students.

Lauren Chaney – Graduate Program Coordinator (lkchaney@ku.edu, (785) 864-1289)
Lauren provides administrative and advising support for the African and African-American Studies graduate program. Contact her with any questions related to the admissions process, enrollment, GTA/GRA/GA appointments, M.A. and Graduate Certificate program requirements, petitions, final exam/defense processes, and graduation.

Core Faculty

You can find a current list of our faculty members on the [AAAS website](#).

University Offices

Your unit's Director of Graduate Studies and/or Graduate Program Coordinator is your first stop for any questions related to graduate study or requirements. If you would like to research an issue in advance of speaking with them or if you still have questions, the following offices can provide assistance:

[College Office of Graduate Affairs \(COGA\)](#)

COGA oversees graduate affairs and administers University policy for programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The COGA website contains comprehensive information on requirements and processes pertaining to graduate education at KU. Most common questions can be answered with the information provided there, including questions regarding [enrollment changes or forms](#), University policies regarding [exams](#) and committee requirements, and University [graduation requirements](#).

COGA reviews all [student petitions](#) related to University and College policy, issuing decisions on behalf of the College or referring as required to a faculty committee and/or Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. The more common student petitions relate to [enrollment](#), [graduate credit](#), [leaves of absence](#), and [time limit extensions](#).

[Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs](#)

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs is the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs at KU. The Executive Council of Graduate Studies sets policies and regulations governing graduate study and offers various programs for graduate students throughout the year. While COGA should be your first stop for any questions your department cannot answer, you may be referred to Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs for certain matters, especially for those related to [GTA/GRA/GA appointments and policies](#).

[Office of the Registrar \(OUR\)](#)

Contact OUR for questions related to enrollment (if the question cannot be resolved via the enrollment changes link provided above under COGA), tuition, campus fees, the Academic Calendar, and fee petitions.

[Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)

Contact Financial Aid and Scholarships for questions related to the disbursement of scholarships, fellowship award, loans, and FAFSA.

[International Support Services \(ISS\)](#)

Contact ISS for questions related to international students, including enrollment requirements, international student insurance, obtaining a social security card, I-20 questions, and any issue related to student visas. While other offices on campus such as the Applied English Center, Human Resources, or the Registrar may also handle related matters, because the students' legal status in the country may be affected, it is recommended that students contact ISS first.

[Center for Teaching Excellence \(CTE\)](#)

CTE is a University office dedicated to assisting instructors and GTAs in developing effective instructional techniques and to introducing instructors and GTAs to the pedagogical technology available at the University. CTE specialists work with instructors and GTAs individually and also offer a diverse array of workshops and discussions.

General Department Policies and Procedures

Admission

Prospective students are admitted to the M.A. or a Graduate Certificate program for the fall or spring semester. We do not offer summer admission. If the application deadline falls on a weekend, holiday, or Monday, the deadline will extend to the following business day.

- Application deadline for fall admission: **May 1**. For first consideration of funding, it is highly encouraged to apply by **January 5**.
- Application deadline for spring admission: **October 1**

M.A. Admission Requirements

1. A completed [graduate application](#).
2. A copy or scan of [official transcripts](#) from each college and post-secondary institution you have attended. Copies of official transcripts should be uploaded directly to the online application. If admitted, applicants will be required to submit official, sealed transcripts directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions within the first semester of enrollment.

Completion of a bachelor's degree is required, preferably in the arts, social sciences, education, or humanities.

3. Statement of purpose: A professional narrative explaining your background, academic interests, and reason for applying to the M.A. program in African and African-American Studies. Please indicate the faculty member(s) with whom you would like to work in your statement. (maximum 3 pages double-spaced).
4. A resume or curriculum vitae listing your education, employment history, volunteer experience, internships, scholarships/fellowships, academic awards, knowledge of foreign languages, and any other relevant information.
5. Three letters of recommendation from qualified individuals, preferring most recent professors.
6. A sample of your writing or creative work that could be an academic paper or a combination of written work and a portfolio of creative work (maximum 15 pages).
7. Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs requires all applicants, international or domestic, whose native language is not English to demonstrate English proficiency. Please review Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs' [English Proficiency Requirements webpage](#) for additional information.

All listed items above must be submitted for your application to be complete and considered for admission into the program. When an application file is complete, the members of the African and African-American Studies Graduate Committee will review it and determine if the student is to be admitted into the program. The Department and Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs will notify the applicant of the final admission decision via email. Admission is based primarily on the applicant's undergraduate and/or graduate record, statement of purpose, and academic references from individuals familiar with the applicant's work.

Applicants are welcome to contact the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Graduate Program

Coordinator with admissions questions.

Graduate Certificate Admission Requirements

Current KU Graduate Students:

Current graduate students wishing to enroll in the African Studies or African-American Studies Graduate Certificate program will apply through Graduate Admissions. A student must be in good standing in their current graduate degree program in order to participate in the certificate program. The application process entails completing the [online application](#) and submitting the required materials. The application is free for current KU students.

1. A letter stating your interest in African Studies and its relationship to your graduate course of study.
2. An unofficial copy of your KU transcript or a current copy of your KU Advising Report.
3. A letter of support from your home department faculty advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies confirming their support of your pursuit of the certificate.

Current KU students must formally apply to the certificate program before they finish the final course work requirement. We cannot grant exceptions to this rule.

Non-KU Graduate Students:

Non-KU graduate students must complete the [online application](#), submit the required materials, and pay a \$30.00 application fee.

1. A letter stating your interest in the African Studies Graduate Certificate program.
2. Official copies of transcripts from all previous post-secondary educational institutions.
3. Two letters of recommendation from persons familiar with your academic work or potential for graduate study.

Graduate certificate applications are reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Non-Degree-Seeking Application Requirements

The Department of African and African-American Studies accepts applications for graduate non-degree-seeking status. Typically, non-degree-seeking applicants do not intend to work toward an advanced degree. Applicants interested in applying for graduate non-degree-seeking status must identify the courses in which they wish to enroll prior to completing the online application. Permission to enroll in a graduate-level African and African-American Studies course is granted by the [instructor](#) of the course.

Required Application Materials:

1. A completed application, along with a non-refundable application fee, submitted online through the [graduate application system](#).
2. Statement of Purpose: A professional narrative explaining your background, academic interests, and reason for applying for graduate non-degree-seeking student status.
3. A copy or scan of [official transcripts](#) from each college and post-secondary institution you have attended. Copies of official transcripts should be uploaded directly to the online

application. If admitted, applicants will be required to submit official, sealed transcripts directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions within the first semester of enrollment.

4. Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs requires all applicants, international or domestic, whose native language is not English to demonstrate English proficiency. Please review Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs' [English Proficiency Requirements webpage](#) for additional information.

Funding & Awards

- Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) appointments are available within the department. Both incoming and current students in good academic standing are eligible to be nominated by the department for a GTA appointment.
- If funds allow, AAAS offers [need-based scholarships](#) for undergraduate and graduate students. The Chair sends a call for applications at the start of the academic year.
- Funding and award opportunities for graduate students can be found on the [Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs](#) website.
- The AAAS department offers a Graduate Student Research Award (\$100), Graduate Student Service Award (\$100), and GTA/Lecturer Teaching-Related Service Award (\$100). Recommendations for such awards will be made by faculty and staff. Please contact the Office Manager for more information.
- The Kansas African Studies Center (KASC) administers Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) scholarship awards for domestic students. For more information, visit the [KASC](#) website for additional information.

Enrollment

Each graduate student meets with the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Coordinator prior to enrolling in their coursework for the upcoming semester. This advising appointment is required to obtain the necessary permission to enroll.

Please notify the DGS and Graduate Program Coordinator if you need to withdraw from your current classes or make a schedule change after the first week of classes as these changes can affect your academic standing and financial aid.

Grading

A grade of C or higher must be achieved for a course to count toward the M.A. or a Graduate Certificate; however, only grades A or B are considered as indications that a graduate student has done satisfactory work in the courses in which they received them.

*Students should carefully review the [Grading](#) portion of the University Policies and Degree Requirements section of this document.

Incomplete Grades

The Department of African and African-American Studies expects students to complete their courses during the term in which they are taken. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from completing the required assignments for a course, it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor to determine if an incomplete grade is appropriate. The terms of the incomplete arrangement, including the lapse date and the list of work to be completed, are developed by the instructor. Please note, an instructor is **not required** by the University or the Department to offer the option of an incomplete.

A student with two or more incomplete grades on their record and/or an incomplete in a AAAS core course (AAAS 801, 802, 803, or 804) may be placed on academic probation (see the [Good Academic Standing](#) section below).

AAAS 899 Thesis Grading Scale

Thesis hours are graded on the SP/LP/NP scale.

- SP: Satisfactory Progress – Goals for the semester as agreed upon with the thesis/faculty advisor have been met.
- LP: Limited Progress – Goals for the semester as agreed upon with the thesis/faculty advisor have been partially met. The academic standing of a student who earns an LP in AAAS 899 for two consecutive semesters will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee and may be placed on academic probation. In the event of probation, the student may be recommended for dismissal from the program if the terms of the probation are not fulfilled.
- NP: No Progress – Goals for the semester as agreed upon with the thesis/faculty advisor have not been met and/or the student has provided insufficient evidence of progress on the thesis. This grade will result in a review of the student's status in the program by the Graduate Committee, which may result in probation. In the event of probation, the student may be recommended for dismissal from the program if the terms of the probation are not fulfilled.

Academic Integrity & Misconduct

The African and African-American Studies Department considers academic integrity essential to our work and we expect students to adhere to its principles in conducting research. This means that students acknowledge the sources they use in their academic work and cite them fully and correctly; not acknowledging a source constitutes plagiarism. Students should consult with faculty well before due dates if they are not sure how to handle a source.

Academic integrity also means that work on examinations and assignments must be carried out by authorized means. Students are subject to sanctions by the University for Academic Misconduct if they violate these principles. Definitions are provided in the [University Senate Rules and Regulations](#).

Good Academic Standing

Students whose cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.0 are placed on probation by

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. Students who do not raise their grade point average to at least a 3.0 by the end of the following semester may be recommended for dismissal by the department.

A graduate student may also be placed on probation whenever the student's committee or the graduate faculty determines their academic progress to be unsatisfactory. Major reasons for probation include, but are not restricted to:

- Failure to maintain an overall cumulative grade point average of B (3.0).
- Failure to identify a faculty advisor by the end of the second semester of graduate study.
- Failure to name a committee by the end of the third semester of graduate study.
- Two or more "Incomplete" (I) grades or an incomplete grade in a AAAS core course.
- Consensus by the graduate faculty that the student is not making satisfactory progress toward a degree.
- Failure to complete and defend the thesis or critical creative project within two semesters of completion of the required coursework.

The Director of Graduate Studies will provide written notice to those placed on probation. In addition, specific requirements which must be met to return to good standing will be outlined.

For additional information on good standing as well as probation and dismissal procedures, please review the [Probation and Dismissal](#) portion of the University Policies and Degree Requirements section of this document.

Annual Graduate Student Review

The academic progress of all graduate students will be reviewed once per academic year by the Director of Graduate Studies. Grades, advancement in degree requirements, progress on the thesis (if applicable), and overall performance will be evaluated by the graduate faculty. The outcome of the evaluation will be communicated in writing to the student by the Director of Graduate Studies. A copy of the evaluation and any recommendations will be placed in the student's file.

Advising & Mentorship

The Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Coordinator advise entering graduate students. The DGS and Graduate Coordinator also meet with each student at least once per semester to check in on their progress in their current classes, discuss future course options, provide general guidance on the program's thesis and critical creative project options, and to address any concerns the student may have.

By the end of the second semester of study, each student must ask a faculty member to serve as their faculty advisor and notify the program's Graduate Program Coordinator via the [Declaration of Advisor Form](#) of the faculty member identified so that it may be documented in the student's file. Faculty advisors are chosen from the department's list of [core faculty](#). The ideal advisor has research interests that align with those of the prospective advisee, which will enable them to advise the student through the development of their thesis or critical creative project. Courtesy faculty may serve as advisors/co-advisors if deemed appropriate by the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair.

Regular and Timely Feedback

The Department of African and African-American Studies is committed to providing regular and timely feedback to ensure graduate students are aware of the assessment of their academic work and their academic standing in the MA program.

- Coursework: Feedback on and grades for course assignments are provided according to the schedule included in the syllabus. Final grades are entered by the instructor in advance of the University's grade submission deadline each semester.
- Academic progress: AAAS reviews all graduate students once per academic year, and students are provided with feedback generated by this review via email by the end of July.
- Thesis/critical creative project work: Faculty advisors provide feedback on thesis/critical creative project work according to parameters listed on the [Declaration of Advisor Form](#), which is developed between student and advisor.

Change of Advisor Policy

Students are free to change advisors at any time during the master's program as long as all parties involved are kept informed and the student secures the support of the new advisor before initiating the change. The student must inform their current advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Program Coordinator of their intent to change advisors. In the event of a disagreement on the part of the current advisor, the issue should be brought to the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair if the current advisor is the Director of Graduate Studies. Students considering an advisor change must understand that their new faculty advisor may expect changes to their program of study. If the student changes advisors or if changes to the program of study occur, the student must notify the Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure that there will be no confusion about meeting degree requirements.

The student must secure a new advisor within three months of initiating the change. The Director of Graduate Studies will serve as the student's advisor within the transition period. A student who is unable to identify a new advisor within the three-month period may be placed on academic probation. Failure to secure a new advisor by the end of the subsequent semester may result in dismissal.

Grievance Procedures

Grievance and grade appeal procedures can be found in the [Bylaws](#) of the Department of African and African-American Studies and in the [policy library](#).

Petitions

If a graduate student has a compelling reason to seek exemption from a program requirement or University policy, they may submit a petition to the AAAS Graduate Committee.

The student should consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure the petition is necessary and that all [appropriate documentation](#) is collected to submit the petition. The petition will be submitted to the Graduate Committee <https://coga.ku.edu/policies-petitions> for consideration.

In cases where the petition relates to a department requirement rather than a University policy, the graduate faculty will issue a final decision. In cases where the policy or requirement being petitioned is a University policy, the graduate faculty will decide whether to support the student's petition or not. If the faculty agrees to support the petition, it will be forwarded to the College Office of Graduate Affairs for consideration.

Information for Graduate Assistants (GTA/GRA/GA)

The Department of African and African-American Studies employs graduate students as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs).

For general guidelines and eligibility requirements pertaining to GTA positions, see: [Graduate Research Assistant, Graduate Teaching Assistant, and Graduate Assistant Appointments: General Guidelines and Eligibility | Policy Library](#).

For definitions of and eligibility requirements for the individual positions, see: [Graduate Teaching Assistant Appointment Eligibility | Policy Library](#).

For information about the benefits available to 3Gs, see: [Benefits Available to Graduate Research Assistants, Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants | Policy Library](#) and [3G Benefits | Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs](#).

Instructions for viewing paystubs are here: [Access Your Paystub | Payroll Office](#).

Any 3G employee with questions or concerns about their appointment or employment should contact their supervisor or supervising faculty member, the Graduate Program Coordinator, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Department Chair.

All 3G employees are required to adhere to the University of Kansas Ethical Code of Conduct, available here: [University of Kansas Code of Ethical Conduct](#).

Common GTA Assignments

The Department of African and African-American Studies employs GTAs in the following roles:

- Instructor of record (IOR) for one language course. IORs have full responsibility for the course.
- Lecture assistant (LA) for a faculty member teaching a large lecture course.

Baseline Expectations for GTAs

This is intended to articulate ordinary standards of professional practice in university instruction, which are all-too-often assumed and unspoken. Since "ordinary standards" are highly contextual, the lists below are open to ongoing discussion and revision. They do not supersede any extant university policy on GTAs, or any provisions of the GTA contract. Instructors of record may provide additional expectations for work in their own courses.

When appointed as a discussion section leader (“DIS”):

1. Attend lectures and read assigned course materials as if enrolled in the course.
2. Lead discussions in your own sections to support students’ understanding of lecture and reading material, and to help them prepare for graded assignments.
3. Grade assignments and exams as designed by the instructor of record, providing feedback in a timely manner.
 - a. The meaning of “timely” may vary with context, but a good standard is to post grades weekly for small assignments and within a maximum of two weeks for major assignments (i.e. final papers). Students must remain informed of their grade in the class to meet credit/no credit and add/drop deadlines, among other things.
 - b. GTAs are responsible for keeping accurate and updated records of students’ attendance and grades on all evaluated work. These should be accessible in the Canvas grade book. It is imperative that GTAs use the grade recording system designated by the instructor of record.
 - c. When similar assignments or exams occur throughout the term, grades should be returned before the next iteration.
 - d. Students should have an updated report of their grade, reflecting all finished assessments up to that point, at least three times before the end of a course, i.e., monthly in a standard semester course.
4. Carry out the policies and criteria for the course as designed by the instructor of record and described in the course syllabus.
5. Hold all discussion sections as scheduled.
 - a. When the GTA’s absence from a section is unavoidable, they should make alternative arrangements, such as giving a group discussion assignment, asking a colleague to cover, offering supplemental office hours, or other options so that students have the benefit of the scheduled section.
 - b. Alternative plans for a missed section should be made in consultation with the instructor of record.
 - c. Students should be notified of a cancelled section as early as possible, usually least 24 hours in advance of the regular meeting time.
6. Hold regular weekly office hours.
 - a. Each GTA is required to hold three office hours per week. Office hours must be held at different times and on different days for the convenience of the students. GTAs must post their office hours on the door to their office and include them in the class syllabus along with their name, office location and e-mail address. Should you be unable to attend your office hours due to an emergency, please notify both students and the office staff.
7. Provide students and the instructor of record with an email address, and check it daily.
 - a. Generally, GTAs should reply to class-related emails within one workday (24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays) when possible.
 - b. GTAs may provide students with other means of contact. This should be in addition to email, not instead of it, since all enrolled students have email through the university.
 - c. GTAs are not required or expected to share personal contact information beyond the KU email address.
8. Be present for exams. The course coordinator will provide GTAs with the dates and times for their exams. GTAs are required to be on campus through finals week and to follow the directives of the course coordinator and of the University regarding dates, times, and

implementation of exams.

When appointed as an instructor of record (“LEC”):

1. Provide students a course syllabus that, in addition to introducing the subject matter of the course, clearly indicates the assignment workload and criteria for evaluation and grading.
2. Hold all scheduled class meetings.
 - a. When the GTA’s absence from a class is unavoidable, they should make alternative arrangements, such as giving a group discussion assignment, asking a colleague to cover, or other options so that students have the benefit of the scheduled class.
 - b. Students should be notified of a cancelled class as early as possible, usually at least 24 hours in advance.
 - c. If it seems that a substantial number of absences (more than two in a regular semester) will be necessary due to medical or other emergency circumstances, the GTA should speak to the department chair as soon as possible.
3. Plan and carry out lectures, presentations, discussions, and other pedagogical activities for the scheduled class time.
4. Assign and evaluate student work as described in the syllabus, providing feedback in a timely manner.
 - a. The meaning of “timely” may vary with context, but a good standard is to post grades weekly for small assignments and within a maximum of two weeks for major assignments (i.e. final papers). Students must remain informed of their grade in the class to meet credit/no credit and add/drop deadlines, among other things.
 - b. GTAs are responsible for keeping accurate and updated records of students’ attendance and grades on all evaluated work. These should be accessible in the Canvas grade book.
 - c. When similar assignments or exams occur throughout the term, grades should be returned before the next iteration.
 - d. Students should have an updated report of their grade, reflecting all finished assessments up to that point, at least three times before the end of a course, i.e., monthly in a standard semester course.
5. Hold regular weekly office hours.
 - a. Each GTA is required to hold three office hours per week. Office hours must be held at different times and on different days for the convenience of the students. GTAs must post their office hours on the door to their office and include them in the class syllabus along with their name, office location and e-mail address. Should you be unable to attend your office hours due to an emergency, please notify both students and the office staff.
6. Provide students with an email address, and check it daily.
 - a. Generally, GTAs should reply to class-related emails within one workday (24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays) when possible.
 - b. GTAs may provide students with other means of contact. This should be in addition to email, not instead of it, since all enrolled students have email through the university.
7. Be present for exams. The course coordinator will provide GTAs with the dates and times for their exams. GTAs are required to be on campus through finals week and to follow the directives of the course coordinator and of the University regarding dates, times, and implementation of exams.

GTA's are not required or expected to share personal contact information beyond the KU email address.

Office Use, Supplies, and Resources

The African and African-American Studies office should be locked when there is no one in the offices. Those students who receive a key, must not share it with anyone.

Graduate students have their mailboxes in the African and African-American Studies main office, and should check them at least twice a week. On occasion, undergraduate students might be asked to drop off an assignment in the instructor's box. The student alone, not the office staff, is responsible for properly delivering their assignment to the GTA's office or directly to the instructor's box.

If a student needs to make up an exam, the GTA can ask the office staff to book a date/time for an available room.

Office Keys

Each GTA will receive access to the building (key or KU card activation) from the Administrative Associate to the outside door of Bailey Hall, and to each individually assigned office. We ask graduate students to be very security-conscious, and to please make sure that the office is locked in their absence. There is a replacement fee for a lost key.

Copying, Computer Use, and Supplies

GTA's have access to the all-in-one copier, printer, and scanning device in the AAAS office at the department's expense, exclusively for course-related documents associated with their employment. GTA's may also request office supplies as needed, like pens, markers, paper clips, rubber bands, staples, tape, etc. from the department administrator, or office staff.

You are required to have your DUO login setup. The IT contact or the office manager will provide DUO instructions. All GTA offices in Bailey have at least one computer to be shared with no more than one other GTA. GTA's may also choose to use computers/receive IT assistance in the various locations in KU buildings. Please contact Ali Yilmaz at aliyilmaz@ku.edu, or call 758-864-8282 for IT Support.

Mailboxes, Mail and E-mail

GTA's are expected to check their e-mail **daily**, and their mailboxes AT LEAST twice a week.

Faculty mailboxes, an outgoing federal, and campus mail drop can be found in the main office. We encourage students to use their home address for federal mail, but should that not be a viable option, the departmental address is:

African and African-American Studies
9 Bailey Hall
1450 Jayhawk Boulevard
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045

Degree Requirements and Procedures

Academic Catalog

The [University Academic Catalog](#) is the definitive source for requirements and regulations for all academic programs. A student is subject to the requirements listed in the Catalog of the year in which they are admitted to a program. This Handbook serves as a supplement to the information in the Catalog with further details about requirements, policies, and department-specific procedures.

M.A. Degree Requirements

The African and African-American Studies M.A. program takes two years of full-time study. The Department of African and African-American Studies offers interdisciplinary substantive and language courses leading to the Master of Arts degree.

The master's degree program has two related objectives: (1) it fulfills the educational needs of persons who seek positions with organizations in both the public and private sectors, and (2) it prepares persons who desire to pursue the terminal degrees in their field. The program emphasizes the broader concepts in the humanities and the social sciences.

The integrative focus of the curriculum is an important characteristic of the interdisciplinary nature of this program. In this regard, the candidate should develop the capacity to continue as a self-educator throughout their career. Broad background study in this field enables the graduate to assimilate newly-acquired skills and methodologies quickly. Graduates should be prepared to cope with the rapid changes in Africa and the African diaspora. The program places considerable emphasis on both the internal and external forces which affect African and African-American societies. The continuity and change in Africa and their impact on world civilizations are emphasized in both the required courses and through electives.

Core Courses

Students, regardless of concentration, are required to take four core courses (12 credit hours):

- **AAAS 801: Introduction to Africana Studies: African-American (3)**
An introduction to, and overview of, the historical, intellectual, and professional foundations of African- American Studies; a multidisciplinary examination of the key texts and issues in the field. LEC
- **AAAS 802: Introduction to Africana Studies: African (3)**
An introduction to, and overview of, the historical, intellectual, and professional foundations of African Studies; a multidisciplinary examination of the key texts and issues in the field. LEC
- **AAAS 803: Research Methods in Africana Studies (3)**
A multidisciplinary introduction to the range of research methods employed to examine African and African-American history, cultures, and societies. LEC
- **AAAS 804: Seminar in Africana Studies (3)**
An interdisciplinary, comparative exploration of the histories, cultures, and societies of Africans and peoples of African descent. Students will be required to utilize the skills gained in AAAS 801 and 802 to design and implement a project that will be critically

assessed in the seminar. Prerequisite: AAAS 801 and AAAS 802 or consent of instructor.
SEM

Elective Courses

Students select five elective AAAS courses (15 credit hours) in consultation with their faculty advisor and/or Director of Graduate Studies.

Critical creative project option students choose seven AAAS elective courses (21 credit hours).

Students may take six credit hours outside of the department in related course offerings with DGS approval. Approved elective courses will normally be in the humanities and social sciences, but courses in the natural sciences and in the professional schools may be approved if the content is deemed appropriate and relevant. Elective courses must be approved by the student's faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

For a non-exhaustive list of possible electives, please reference the [courses webpage](#) on the department's website.

Thesis Hours

Students who choose to complete the thesis option must enroll in six thesis hours (**AAAS 899: Thesis**). No more than six thesis hours may be applied toward the 33 credit hours required for the M.A.

Research Skills Requirement

Students will fulfill a research skills requirement in accordance with their research interests. Language/research skills courses must be taken at the 500 level or above to count toward the 33 hours required for the degree.

Students conducting research in African studies must obtain proficiency in an African language. Proficiency may be fulfilled by one of the following:

- Completing two years of college-level language study at KU, at an equivalent institution, or through an intensive course. Language courses offered on a regular basis at KU that count toward proficiency are Arabic, Kiswahili, Wolof, Yoruba, and any one of the number of African languages for which the Kansas African Studies Center has pedagogical materials and proficiency-testing capabilities, or
- The equivalent of two years of an approved language, or
- Proof that the student is a native speaker of an African language.

Students conducting research in African-American studies must:

- Fulfill the African language requirement outlined above, or
- Fulfill a non-African language requirement by employing standards comparable to those governing the African language requirement outlined above, or
- Demonstrate competence in a research skill relevant to the student's specific area of research. Competence in a research skill is certified by the department's Director of

Graduate Studies.

In consultation with their faculty advisor and to the satisfaction of the Department, students must demonstrate that their choice of a language or research skill is appropriate for their specific research interest.

Thesis/Critical Creative Project Expectations

If the thesis option is chosen, the student will develop a high-quality document that meets the standards of a strong academic work.

The critical creative project option requires a high-quality creative project containing two pieces of work including, but not limited to, research papers, creative/artistic works, exhibitions, and digital humanities projects. The critical creative project must meet the standards of a strong academic work.

Regardless of the option chosen, the student works in close consultation with their faculty advisor/committee chair during the drafting process. The student's work must be circulated to the faculty advisor early and often to ensure consistent and satisfactory progress. The thesis/critical creative project will undergo multiple rounds of feedback with the faculty advisor before it is ready for full committee circulation.

Thesis/Critical Creative Project Committees

By the end of the third semester of study, the student should choose a thesis/critical creative project committee. The committee must include a minimum of three graduate faculty members. The committee chair, which is typically the student's faculty advisor, and one other member of the committee must be a member of the African and African-American Studies graduate faculty. A courtesy faculty member may serve as chair/co-chair if deemed appropriate by the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair. **As soon as the committee has been formed, the student must submit, in writing, the names of the committee members to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Coordinator for approval.** Any changes to the committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and documented. For additional information regarding the committee configuration requirements, review the [Milestone Exams](#) portion of the University Policies and Degree Requirements section of this Handbook.

Thesis/Critical Creative Project Defense

A final oral defense of the thesis or the critical creative project is required. A student must be in good standing (3.0 GPA or higher and no incomplete (I) grades) before scheduling the defense. The defense is administered by the thesis/critical creative project committee described above. **This committee should be assembled and named by the end of the third semester of study.** One member, typically the student's faculty advisor, shall act as chairperson and will, among other tasks, ensure that the student and all members of the committee share a common understanding of the objectives, substance, and methods of the project throughout its course. In order to complete the degree in two years, students should develop their subject area during their first year in the program and should formulate their thesis or critical creative project topic in conjunction

with their faculty advisor no later than the beginning of the third semester in the program. It is the responsibility of the student to confer with the committee chair to determine the process and establish a timeline for the completion of the thesis or critical creative project.

The thesis or critical creative project defense is held during the student's final semester in the program. It should be held when the thesis or critical creative project has been substantially completed and has been given approval by the committee. Committee approval of the thesis or critical creative project will be documented through the completion of the [Thesis or Critical Creative Project Checklist](#). The Graduate Program Coordinator will assist the student with the scheduling of the defense as soon as the Thesis or Critical Creative Project Checklist is turned in.

At least two calendar weeks prior to the defense date, the student will submit the final draft of the thesis or critical creative project to all committee members and inform the Director of Graduate Studies. **Failure to meet this deadline, without prior approval from the committee chair and Director of Graduate Studies, will necessitate rescheduling the defense.**

A thesis defense includes both questions about the thesis topic, argument, methodology, as well as questions that discuss the thesis within large contexts of the field.

A critical creative project defense includes both questions about the research paper/project topics, argument, methodology, as well as questions that discuss the thesis within large contexts of the field.

After the defense, the committee will deliberate regarding the outcome (satisfactory or unsatisfactory).

See the [Milestone Exams](#) portion of the University Policies and Degree Requirements section of this Handbook for more information about defense policies.

Graduation Procedures

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with all graduation requirements and deadlines. All requirements must be completed by 11:59 p.m. CT the evening of the graduation deadline.

Early in the semester in which you intend to graduate, carefully review the [Graduation Requirements](#) portion and associated links of the University Policies and Degree Requirements section of this Handbook.

African Studies Graduate Certificate Program Requirements

AAAS and KASC's central objective in the African Studies Certificate Program is to formally recognize the expertise students in a range of disciplines already obtain in African Studies, in a manner that enhances students' career opportunities. The Certificate in African Studies enables graduate students to formally claim expertise in an area of the field of African Studies through completion of twelve hours of graduate course work.

Course Sequence

Twelve credit hours are required. This includes the core introductory seminar course, AAAS 802: Introduction to African Studies (Africa).

Students are then required to take an additional three courses (9 hours). All courses, including language course work, must be taken at the 500-level or above. At least one of these courses (3 hours) must be taken at the 700-level or above. Only courses with an Africa focus may count toward the required hours. No more than three hours of directed readings or independent study may be counted. Any students who utilize directed readings or independent studies courses are required to submit a paragraph summary of the course of study signed by the professor directing the project, so that AAAS can know how the course counts toward fulfillment of the requirements.

All approvals of course sequences are at the discretion of AAAS. Be sure to fill out the [Graduate Certificate Checklist](#) and turn it in to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Coordinator within the first half of the term in which you plan to complete the certificate.

African-American Studies Graduate Certificate Program Requirements

AAAS' central objective in the African-American Studies Certificate Program is to formally recognize the expertise students in a range of disciplines already obtain in African-American Studies, in a manner that enhances students' career opportunities. The Certificate in African-American Studies enables graduate students to formally claim expertise in an area of the field of African-American Studies through completion of twelve hours of graduate course work.

Course Sequence

Twelve credit hours are required. This includes the core introductory seminar course, AAAS 801: Introduction to Africana Studies.

Students are then required to take an additional three courses (9 hours). All courses must be at the 500-level or above. At least one of these courses (3 hours) must be taken at the 700-level or above. Only courses with an Africa or African-American focus may count toward the required hours. No more than three hours of directed readings or independent study may be counted. Any students who utilize directed readings or independent studies courses are required to submit a paragraph summary of the course of study signed by the professor directing the project, so that AAAS can know how the course counts toward fulfillment of the requirements.

All approvals of course sequences are at the discretion of AAAS. Be sure to fill out the [Graduate Certificate Checklist](#) and turn it in to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Coordinator within the first half of the term in which you plan to complete the certificate.

University Policies and Degree Requirements

This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included.

Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

General Policies

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

[Admission](#)

Degree or non-degree seeking applicants must have a bachelor’s degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Admission to Graduate Study](#)

[English Proficiency Requirements](#)

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are multiple ways to prove English proficiency:

- Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.
- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to graduateadm@ku.edu for verification.
- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU [Applied English Center](#) (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.
- US Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' [Spoken English Competency page](#).

[Enrollment](#)

For graduate students, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the department level. While units within the College may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full time (e.g. students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full time enrollment is as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). *See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment.

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s).

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

Students not enrolled by 11:59pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must pay a fee to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the department of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the “Withdraw from the University” option.

Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current [Academic Calendar](#).**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on [Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript](#).

Your graduate program coordinator is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. In order to avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

Related Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

[Graduate Credit \(Including Transfer Credit\)](#)

The University's Graduate Credit [policy](#) defines KU's conditions for the following:

- Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course “counting” towards a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;
- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for master's students;
- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate seeking student toward another graduate degree.

Transfer Credit

The transfer credit option allows master's students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper-level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer

in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours that can be counted toward a KU master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the Ph.D. In circumstances where students enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the Ph.D. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced hour degree master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced credit hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify. A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript. Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below.

In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS. Students must also provide documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the Ph.D., reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Related Policies:

- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#) (on Reduced Hour Master's Degree)

Credit/No Credit

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student

receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC [online request](#) form. Elections and changes to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found on the current KU [Academic Calendar](#). Please keep in mind, short courses may have [alternate dates](#).

The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)

[Probation & Dismissal](#)

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making [satisfactory progress](#) toward completing their degree. The department initiates the probation process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative [GPA dropping below a B average \(3.0 on a 4.0 scale\)](#). In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing. Additionally, the College has set a 2.5 minimum GPA for students to be eligible for a semester of academic probation. In cases where a student's GPA drops below the minimum of 2.5, the student is considered ineligible for academic probation and will be dismissed by the College. Students are strongly advised to review the [College-specific policy on probation and dismissal](#) for more information about the 2.5 threshold for dismissal.

Students may also be placed on probation by their departments for other reasons that constituting a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis, dissertation, or capstone project
- Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams),
- Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)

- An unsatisfactory result in their department’s annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the [Good Academic Standing policy](#) for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress.

Individual programs may also have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their department graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

[Grading](#)

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs’ [Grading policy](#) governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in [Article II](#) of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.

Students should carefully review the [College-specific grading information](#), in particular the section on the SP/LP/NP grading scale for thesis & dissertation hours and the impacts of receiving a LP (limited progress) or NP (no progress). Students should also consult their adviser and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them. Students should also consult their faculty advisor and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information about department-specific grading policies.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on course work counted toward any of the master's degrees at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Course work counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Related Policies:

- [University Senate Rules & Regulations](#)

- [Grading](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)

[Time limits](#)

Typically, the University expects the master's degree to be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six to seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the link above and in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that the College's Mentoring Agreement is required for doctoral students who are within 2 years of exhausting their maximum time to degree. See the [College Graduate Regulations](#) or talk to your graduate program coordinator for more information. **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams](#) (on exam expiration and recertification)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time To Degree Information](#)
- [Graduate Degree Completion Agreement](#) (PDF)

[Leave of Absence](#)

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework while remaining in good standing with the University and the department and while "stopping the clock" on their time to degree. When a student is on Leave of Absence status it is understood that they have temporarily suspended their graduate work and therefore will not make use of University resources, including faculty time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director of Graduate Studies and review their department's internal petition procedures. Units or the Director of Graduate Study may request documentation to support the student's need for a leave of absence.

In order for a Leave of Absence to be approved, the student must be withdrawn from all active

and/or future enrollment. Withdrawal for the purposes of Leave of Absence is still subject to all Registrar deadlines, required forms, and applicable tuition and fees.

Students on Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the [KU Academic Calendar](#) for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If at any time plans change and a student wishes to return and enroll before leave was supposed to end, they may contact their department to be reactivated early.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Leaves of Absence](#)

[Required University Milestones](#)

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

- Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for Master's degree
- Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Exam
- Doctoral Final Exam/Dissertation Defense

*A final culminating effort is not required for departments with an approved coursework-only master's degree option in the Academic Catalog (note that programs with a capstone are considered coursework only).

Before a student is allowed to complete any of these three exams, pre-approval from the school/College is required in advance of the exam date. This pre-approval request will be submitted on the student's behalf by their department after the exam date has been scheduled. The school/College reviews the student record and verifies all University requirements have been fulfilled. The full list of these requirements may be found via the link in the heading above. Students should work with their departments well in advance of their planned exam date, to schedule their exams in a timely fashion and to ensure that all University policies relating to oral exams are being followed.

There are additional policies requirements for oral exams. The following are University policies pertaining to oral exams:

Oral Exam Committee Composition

All voting committee members must be appointed members of the Graduate Faculty of KU. Additionally, a majority of committee members serving on a graduate student oral examination committee must be tenured/tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department or program of study.

Many additional restrictions apply, especially for doctoral exam committees. Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the University policies pertaining to exams, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies when forming an exam committee. Your graduate

program coordinator can assist with confirming the qualifying status of any faculty member at KU, or outside of KU.

Oral Exam Attendance

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin and if a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the policies below, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies in the formation of an oral exam committee.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Oral Exam Attendance](#)
- [Graduate Faculty Appointments](#)

Graduate Certificate Requirements

The University offers a variety of [Approved Graduate Certificate Programs](#) to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate program requirements.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria](#)
- [Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

Graduation Requirements (M.A. & Ph.D.)

In addition to all program requirements, students [planning to graduate](#) must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

Graduate Student Funding Opportunities

The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs (GPA) offers funding opportunities in several different categories. Students interested in applying should direct inquiries to the department's Director of Graduate Studies or to GPA. Some of the available funding includes:

Summer Research Scholarships: intended primarily for post-comp doctoral students.

Graduate Student Travel Fund: intended for graduate students presenting a paper at a national or regional meeting of a learned or professional society. A student may receive an award (max \$750) only once per academic year, with priority given to students who have not received the fund previously. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Appendices

African and African-American Studies

Recommended Plan for Completion of MA Degree

- **Required core courses: Twelve (12) credit hours**
- **Elective courses: Fifteen (15) credit hours**
Six (6) hours of elective courses may be taken outside of the department; courses must be related to African and/or African-American Studies and receive prior approval from the Graduate Director
- **Thesis: Six (6) credit hours plus defense of thesis**
- **Critical Creative Project: Additional six (6) elective credit hours plus oral exam focused on two significant research papers or projects drawn from course work**

Thirty-Three (33) credit hours total for degree

Thesis Option

Fall Semester 1: Year 1

AAAS 801 (3)
Elective Course (3)
Elective Course (3)

Spring Semester 1: Year 1

AAAS 802 (3)
Elective Course (3)
Elective Course (3)

- *Faculty advisor confirmed (by end of semester or sooner)
- *Inform Graduate Director and Graduate Program Coordinator

Fall Semester 2: Year 2

AAAS 803 (3)
Elective Course (3)

- *Thesis committee confirmed (by end of semester or sooner)
- *Inform Graduate Director and Graduate Program Coordinator

Spring Semester 2: Year 2

AAAS 804 (3)
AAAS 899: Thesis (6)

- *Complete "Graduation Requirement Checklist" and submit form to Graduate Program Coordinator
- *Complete Application for Graduation through Enroll & Pay
- *Submit thesis and all other graduation requirements according to [COGA's Master's Graduation Checklist](#)

Critical Creative Project Option

Fall Semester 1: Year 1

AAAS 801 (3)
Elective Course (3)
Elective Course (3)

Spring Semester 1: Year 1

AAAS 802 (3)
Elective Course (3)
Elective Course (3)

- *Faculty advisor confirmed (by end of semester or sooner)
- *Inform Graduate Director and Graduate Program Coordinator

Fall Semester 2: Year 2

AAAS 803 (3)
Elective Course (3)
Elective Course (3)

- *Committee confirmed (by end of semester or sooner)
- *Inform Graduate Director and Graduate Program Coordinator

Spring Semester 2: Year 2

AAAS 804 (3)
Elective Course (3)

- *Complete "Graduate Requirement Checklist" and submit form to Graduate Academic Advisor
- *Complete Application for Degree through Enroll & Pay

African and African-American Studies M.A. Thesis Option Checklist

Student: _____

First Term Enrolled (e.g. Fall 2024): _____

Within the first half of the semester in which you plan to receive your degree, complete this form, obtain the required signatures, and submit the completed form to the Graduate Program Coordinator. They will then assist you with the oral defense scheduling process by polling your committee members for their availability during your preferred defense week. If you have questions regarding committee composition requirements or the defense process, please reach out to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Thesis Option Coursework Requirements

Course Number	Course Title	Term
AAAS 801	Introduction to Africana Studies: African American	_____
AAAS 802	Introduction to Africana Studies: African	_____
AAAS 803	Research Methods in Africana Studies	_____
AAAS 804	Seminar in Africana Studies	_____
15 hours (5 classes) of electives:		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
AAAS 899	Thesis (6 hours)	_____

Oral Thesis Defense Information:

Preferred week for defense (5-7 days): _____

Preferred room for defense: _____

Title of thesis: _____

Names of committee members: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Committee Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Graduate Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

African and African-American Studies M.A. Critical Creative Project Option Checklist

Student: _____ First Term Enrolled (e.g. Fall 2024): _____

Within the first half of the semester in which you plan to receive your degree, complete this form, obtain the required signatures, and submit the completed form to the Graduate Program Coordinator. They will then assist you with the oral defense scheduling process by polling your committee members for their availability during your preferred defense week. If you have questions regarding committee composition requirements or the defense process, please reach out to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Coursework Requirements

Course Number	Course Title	Term
AAAS 801	Introduction to Africana Studies: African American	_____
AAAS 802	Introduction to Africana Studies: African	_____
AAAS 803	Research Methods in Africana Studies	_____
AAAS 804	Seminar in Africana Studies	_____

21 hours (7 classes) of electives:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Oral Defense Information:

Preferred week for defense (5-7 days): _____

Preferred room for defense: _____

Names of committee members: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Committee Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Graduate Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

African and African-American Studies M.A. Program

Declaration of Advisor Form

Student: _____

First Term Enrolled (e.g. Fall 2026): _____

This form is a tool intended to support positive mentoring relationships, the objective evaluation of progress, and completion of the African and African-American Studies M.A. degree in a timely manner. With this form, the faculty advisor agrees to mentor the student through the creation of the M.A. thesis or critical creative project. The form confirms student and faculty advisor roles and responsibilities, and lays out a plan for meetings and deadlines as the student approaches submission and defense of the thesis or critical creative project in the final semester of the program.

The Agreement must:

- Be part of an extended and ongoing conversation between the student and their advisor(s) and should be discussed and agreed upon by all parties to that conversation.
- Clearly outline expectations for the student, advisor, and committee members.
- Establish a **realistic** timeline for progress that takes into account past performance, the work that remains, the amount of time the student can reasonably dedicate to capstone work, and circumstances that have impacted timely progress thus far.
- **Be submitted by the end of the student's second semester of enrollment in the African and African-American Studies M.A. program.**

Communication & Engagement

Describe, in detail, expectations for communications, meetings, and engagement for the student, advisor, and committee members. The advisor and student should discuss and agree on the following:

- How often will you meet in person or virtually? How often should student check in via email?

- What is the preferred method of communication outside of meetings? What is the expected response time for communications? (May be different for advisor and student, but both should be included on this form)

- What is the expected turnaround time for advisor feedback or edits after receiving a draft?

- How and when will the student’s committee or other mentors provide feedback or evaluate the student’s work? (some prefer to wait until the defense, which is acceptable, but cannot result in requests for significant revisions or additions)
- How should the student prepare for meetings with the advisor and/or committee?
- What else should the student know about expectations (sometimes implicit) of a student at the thesis/critical creative project stage?

Completion Timeline

Provide a detailed list of all tasks required for the student to make satisfactory and timely progress toward M.A. thesis or critical creative project completion. List tasks corresponding to the various stages of research, outlines, drafts, revisions, defense, and the final submission of the capstone. See the Registrar’s [approved academic calendars page](#) for each semester’s graduation deadline.

This timeline should be realistic and take into account extenuating circumstances and barriers that may prevent progress.

Please note:

- Students are encouraged to defend at least two weeks before the graduation deadline to ensure they have enough time to complete post-defense revisions.
- Students must circulate a full draft to their committee at least two weeks before the defense date.

Schedule of Tasks

Tasks to be completed by the student and advisor/chair	Due Date

--	--

Name of Committee Chair: _____

Name of Committee Co-Chair (if applicable): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Committee Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Co-Chair Signature (if applicable): _____ Date: _____

Graduate Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

This section reserved for changes only

Please review the Change of Advisor Policy in the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) prior to completing this section.

Change Chairperson(s) to: _____

New Committee Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Graduate Director Signature: _____

African Studies Graduate Certificate Checklist

Student: _____

Home Master's or Ph.D. Program (if applicable): _____

Within the first half of the semester in which you plan to complete your certificate, complete this form, obtain the required signatures, and submit the completed form to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Coursework Requirements

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Term</u>
AAAS 802	Introduction to Africana Studies: African	_____
Three Course Sequence with an Africa focus (9 hours)		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

*All courses, including language coursework, must be taken at the 500-level or above. At least one of the courses in the three course sequence (3 credit hours) must be taken at the 700-level or above. Only courses with an Africa focus may count toward the required hours. No more than three hours of directed readings or independent study may be counted.

Notes:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

AAAS Grad. Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Requirement Checklist (to be filled out by the AAAS Graduate Director):

- ___ 12 credit hours
- ___ Graduate GPA 3.0 or above
- ___ At least one course at 700-level or above
- ___ Graduate Certificate Application submitted to Graduate Admission

African-American Studies Graduate Certificate Checklist

Student: _____

Home Master's or Ph.D. Program (if applicable): _____

Within the first half of the semester in which you plan to complete your certificate, complete this form, obtain the required signatures, and submit the completed form to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Coursework Requirements

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Term</u>
AAAS 801	Introduction to Africana Studies: African-American	_____
Three Course Sequence with an Africa focus (9 hours)		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

*All courses, including language coursework, must be at the 500-level or above. At least one of the courses in the three course sequence (3 credit hours) must be taken at the 700-level or above. Only courses with an African-American focus may count toward the required hours. No more than three hours of directed readings or independent study may be counted.

Notes:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

AAAS Grad. Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Requirement Checklist (to be filled out by the AAAS Graduate Director):

- ___ 12 credit hours
- ___ Graduate GPA 3.0 or above
- ___ At least one course at 700-level or above
- ___ Graduate Certificate Application submitted to Graduate Admission