

# MASTER'S DEGREE POLICIES

## Approved Program (p. 1)

The entire course of study undertaken for any master's degree must constitute a unified, coherent program that is approved by the student's advisor and Graduate Director and meets Graduate School requirements.

## Credit Hours (p. 1)

A minimum of thirty credit hours in courses acceptable for credit towards a graduate degree is required. At least 12 of those credits must be earned in the major subject approved by the graduate program in which the student is enrolled.

For a master's degree with the thesis option, a minimum of 12 credit hours of coursework at the 600 level and above is required in addition to at least six credit hours of thesis research (799). No more than six credit hours of thesis research may count towards satisfaction of the minimum degree requirements.

For the master's degree with the non-thesis option, a minimum of 18 credit hours in courses numbered 600 and above is required, as well as one or more scholarly papers, some portion of which must be written. In many cases, successful completion of comprehensive examinations is required by the program.

## Coursework Level (p. 1)

The graduate program must include at least 12 hours of course work at the 600 level or higher; no fewer than 12 hours of course work credit must be earned in the major subject approved by the graduate program in which the student is enrolled.

## Residence Credit (p. 1)

A minimum of 50% of the credit hours required for the degree must be completed as a University of Maryland graduate student, either on the College Park campus or at an approved University of Maryland instructional site. Courses completed in University of Maryland graduate certificate program(s) would be considered residency courses upon admission to a University of Maryland degree program. For more information on courses acceptable for credit towards a University of Maryland graduate degree, please review the Academic Record policies (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/academic-record/>) section of this catalog.

## Prerequisites (p. 1)

If a student is inadequately prepared for the required graduate courses, additional courses may be deemed necessary; such courses will not be considered part of the student's approved program of study.

## Single Credit Application (p. 1)

Credits to be applied to a student's program for a master's degree cannot have been used to satisfy any other previously earned degrees (see policies governing the applicability of previously taken courses to University of Maryland degrees).

## Graduate School Requirements for the Degrees of Master of Arts and Master of Science (p. 1)

A thesis must be submitted for the Master of Arts or Master of Science degrees except for those programs for which a non-thesis option has been approved by the Graduate Council. Approval of the thesis is the responsibility of a nominated and approved Examining Committee. The advisor is normally the chairperson of the committee, and the remaining members of the committee are members of the Graduate Faculty who are familiar with the student's program of study.

## Research Assurances (p. 1)

### Human Subject Research

Everyone at the University of Maryland who is conducting research that involves human subjects must obtain approval in advance from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is charged with approving the initiation of research involving human subjects and conducts periodic reviews of that research to ensure that all projects comply with Federal regulations. These regulations are strict and the Graduate School urges all graduate students to consult with the IRB before beginning any research on living subjects. For application forms and guidelines on such issues as research involving minors or prisoners, surveys, and the use of audio taping, videotaping, digital recordings and photographs, please see the Institutional Review Board's website (<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/>).

### Other Research

If the thesis research involves the use of vertebrate animals, animal use protocols must be approved in advance by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of record. If the thesis research involves hazardous materials, either biological or chemical, or recombinant RNA/DNA, the research must be approved by the appropriate University committee. These research assurances must be approved prior to the initiation of any thesis-related research, and the approvals must be provided to the Graduate School at the time the student submits the Nomination of Examining Committee form.

## The Master's Thesis Examination (p. 1)

A final oral examination of the thesis will be held when the student has completed the thesis to the satisfaction of the student's advisor, all other requirements for the degree have been completed, and a 3.0 grade point average (computed in accordance with the regulations described under "Grades for Graduate students") has been earned.

### Establishment of the Thesis Examining Committee

The Thesis Examining Committee is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, in accordance with the policies listed below:

- **Eligibility.** A student is eligible to be examined on a thesis if the student:
  - a. has met all program requirements for a thesis examination,
  - b. is in good standing as a graduate student at the University,
  - c. is registered for at least one credit,
  - d. has a nominated and approved Thesis Examining Committee,
  - e. has at least a 3.0 grade point average, and

- f. if this is the second examination, the examination has been approved by the Graduate School.
- **Thesis Examining Committee Membership.** The Committee will include a minimum of three members of the Graduate Faculty, at least two of whom will be Full Members. The Chair of the Committee normally will be the student's advisor, who will be a Full or Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty, or who has been granted an exception to the policy by the Dean of the Graduate School.
- **Membership on a Thesis Examining Committee.** Requires nomination by the student's advisor and Graduate Director in the student's graduate program, and approval by the Office of the Registrar. The nomination of a Thesis Examining Committee should be submitted at least six weeks before the date of the expected thesis examination. The thesis examination cannot be held until the composition of the Thesis Examining Committee is approved. Furthermore, if the Graduate Faculty status of any member of an approved Thesis Examining Committee changes, the approval of the Thesis Examining Committee may be voided, and a new Committee nomination form will be required for approval.
- **Chair.** The Thesis Examining Committee will have as chair the student's advisor, who must be a Full or Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty or, by special permission, has been otherwise appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. Thesis Examining Committees may have co-chairs.

## Procedures for the Oral Examination (p. 2)

**Oral Examination Requirement.** Each master's thesis student must defend orally their master's thesis as a requirement in partial fulfillment of the master's degree (an additional comprehensive written examination may be required at the option of the program.)

- **Committee Preparation.** The members of the Thesis Examining Committee must receive the thesis at least seven working days before the scheduled examination. Should the Thesis Examining Committee deem it reasonable and appropriate, it may require submission of the thesis more than seven working days in advance of the examination.
- **Attendance at the Examination.** Oral examinations must be attended by all members of the student's officially established Thesis Examining Committee as approved by the Office of the Registrar. All examinations must be open to members of University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. Programs may wish routinely to open thesis examinations to a broader audience. In such cases, program policies must be established, recorded, and made available to all master's students. Should a last-minute change in the constitution of the Thesis Examining Committee be required, the change must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the program's Graduate Director and the chair of the student's Thesis Examining Committee.
- **Remote Participation in Examinations.** All questions related to remote defenses should be sent to [graduate-dean@umd.edu](mailto:graduate-dean@umd.edu). Under normal circumstances, all members of a Thesis Examining Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances. Remote participation by video teleconferencing is permitted under the following circumstances:
  - Permission to conduct a remote-participation defense must be obtained by the thesis chair from the Graduate School in advance. In making this request, the chair must indicate in writing that they have read the rules for a remote defense listed below.
  - Video conferencing software must be used that allows all participants to see and hear each other during the entire defense.
  - The candidate and the committee chair (or at least one of the co-chairs) must all be present in the examination room; none may be at a remote site except for under highly unusual circumstances that restrict travel or in-person participation.
  - If necessary, other members of the committee may participate from one or more remote sites as long as the conferencing software supports the rules of conduct of the defense. Permission for remote participation must be approved in advance by the Dean of the Graduate School. The request for remote participation must provide a compelling reason and/or explanation as to why each remote committee member cannot be physically present.
  - The remote participants must connect to the defense in a manner that will ensure that all participants are visible and audible and that the connection is stable and available throughout the scheduled time of the defense. Remote participation must occur from a private and quiet location that is free of distractions and under conditions that allow remote participants to be fully attentive.
  - The committee chair is responsible for ensuring that all requirements for remote participation are met, that the remote participation was uninterrupted, and if interrupted, that the defense was paused until all remote participants were fully restored.
  - Units can opt to offer online synchronous viewing options even when all committee members are in-person, with the defending student's consent.
- **Location of the Examination.** Oral examinations of theses must be held in University facilities that are readily accessible to all members of the Thesis Examining Committee and others attending the examination. The chair of the Thesis Examining Committee selects the time and place for the examination and notifies the other members of the committee and the candidate.
- **Emergency Substitution Procedure.** Last-minute emergencies can prevent a committee member from attending a scheduled thesis examination. The Graduate School will work with the chair of the examining committee and/or the Director of Graduate Studies to make last-minute substitutions in committee membership to allow the examination to take place as scheduled.
  - The request must be sent in writing via email to the Dean of the Graduate School. A telephone call to the Graduate School explaining that an emergency request is coming will facilitate the process.
  - The proposed substitute must be a member of the Graduate Faculty consistent with the rules for committee membership. Thus, if the Dean's Representative (who must be a tenured faculty member) could not attend, the substitution of an untenured member of the Graduate Faculty would not be acceptable.

- Once the written request has been received, the substitution will be made, usually within the hour, provided that the revised committee meets the requirements for committee membership.
- When the substitution has been made, a written confirmation via email will be sent, along with a telephone confirmation. The substitution is not official, however, until the written confirmation has been received in the graduate program. A copy of the written request and the written confirmation must be placed in the student's file for future reference.
- An examination that is held with one or more substitute members on the committee, but without prior written confirmation from the Graduate School that the substitution(s) have been approved, will be voided and the examination will have to be repeated.
- **Invalidation of the Examination.** The Dean may void any examination not carried out in accordance with the procedures and policies of the Graduate School. In addition, upon the recommendation of the Thesis Examining Committee or any member thereof, the Dean of the Graduate School may rule an oral examination to be null and void.
- **Conclusion of the Examination.** After the oral examination, the student and any others who are not members of the Thesis Examining Committee will be asked to leave the room and the Thesis Examining Committee will discuss whether or not the thesis (including its examination) has been satisfactory. The Committee has the following options:
  - a. To accept the thesis and the oral defense without any recommended changes and sign the Report of the Examining Committee.
  - b. To accept the oral defense, but recommend substantive revisions to the thesis and, except for the chair, sign the Report of the Examining Committee. The chair will provide the committee and student with a list of the required revisions. The chair will check that the changes to the thesis have been made, and, upon their approval, sign the Report of the Examining Committee.
  - c. To accept the oral defense, but recommend substantive revisions to the thesis and not sign the Report of the Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised thesis for the Thesis Examining Committee's approval. The chair will provide the committee and student with a list of the required revisions. The Thesis Examining Committee members sign the Report of the Examining Committee if they approve the revised thesis.
  - d. To recommend major revisions to the theses and/or to deem the oral defense deficient. In this case, the committee would reconvene a closed meeting of only the Thesis Examining Committee and the student to complete the student's examination. The chair will provide the committee and student with a list of the required significant revisions to the thesis and/or deficiencies in the oral defense. The chair also will inform the program's Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Graduate School of the required revisions/deficiencies and the timeline for reconvening the Examining Committee. During the reconvened meeting, committee members' questions will focus on the revisions to the thesis and/or the deficiencies in the prior oral defense. Ordinarily, the reconvened meeting of the Thesis Examining Committee will occur within two months after the initial meeting oral defense.
- e. To rule the thesis (including its examination and oral defense) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails. Following the examination, the chair must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. The committee chair must sign the Report of the Examining Committee, including a statement explaining why the thesis was deemed unsatisfactory. A copy of this statement must be included in the student's file at the graduate program office, and a copy is given to the student. This statement must be submitted to the program's Graduate Director, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the student.
- **Passage or Failure.** The student passes if all members of the Thesis Examining Committee accept the thesis (including its examination) as satisfactory. One or more negative votes constitute a failure of the candidate to meet the thesis requirement. A second examination may be permitted if the student will be in good standing at the time of the proposed second examination. A second examination requires the approval of the program's Graduate Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. If the student fails this second examination, or if a second examination is not permitted, the student's admission to the graduate program is terminated.
- **The Decision to Accept the Examination as Satisfactory Must Be Unanimous.** Students may present themselves for examination only twice. The report of the committee, signed by each member, must be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School no later than the appropriate date listed in the *Schedule of Classes* if the student is to receive a diploma at the Commencement ceremony for the semester in which the examination is held.

## Submission and Publication of the Thesis (p. 3)

Theses are to be submitted to the Graduate School in electronic format after final approval of the document by the Thesis Examining Committee. See the University of Maryland Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) website (<https://www.etsadmin.com/main/home/>) or the University of Maryland Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide ([http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/current\\_students/etd\\_style\\_guide.html](http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/current_students/etd_style_guide.html)) for the details of this process.

Theses submitted to the University through the ETD process will also be deposited in the UM Library's online electronic archive, DRUM (Digital Repository at the University of Maryland) (<http://drum.lib.umd.edu>). This is a free public archive of academic work by University faculty and graduate students. The submission of the thesis to the University in fulfillment of degree requirements grants the University the one-time, non-exclusive right to publish the document on DRUM.

## The University's Rights

The University of Maryland retains non-exclusive distribution, reproduction, and archival rights to theses and doctoral dissertations submitted to the Graduate Faculty in fulfillment of requirements for a graduate degree. Such rights entitle the University of Maryland to reproduce, archive, and distribute theses and dissertations, in whole or in part, in and from an electronic format, as it sees fit. Distribution is subject to a release date stipulated by the student and approved by the University.

## THE STUDENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the owner of copyright in the thesis or dissertation, students have the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, make derivative works based on, publicly perform and display their work, and to authorize others to exercise some or all of those rights. As a condition of graduation, each student's thesis or dissertation must be published to support the university's mission of advancing knowledge as a public institution. When students submit their work to the Graduate School, they will be given several options regarding access to their document via ProQuest's Digital Dissertations and DRUM, the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland. The student's options are:

- **Making the thesis or dissertation available via ProQuest and DRUM as soon as it is received.** The abstract and full text of your work will be present in ProQuest's Digital Dissertations for purchase, and will be both freely available and searchable online via DRUM.
- **Automatically restrict online publication of the thesis or dissertation for two years.** Students may place an embargo (a restriction) of two years on electronic access to your document through ProQuest's Digital Dissertations and DRUM. Should a student elect to restrict online publication of their work, a description of the research, including the student's name, the document's title, the advisor's name (or advisors' names), and the abstract will be available via ProQuest and DRUM, but the actual electronic file will be unavailable for viewing or download until the selected embargo period has passed. This embargo option does not require special permission, but students should discuss this option with their advisor(s) in advance of deciding whether to place a two-year embargo on their work
- **Request an online publication restriction of the thesis or dissertation for up to six years.** Students may request an embargo (a restriction) of up to six years on electronic access to their document through ProQuest's Digital Dissertations and DRUM if there is legitimate reason to do so. Should the work be restricted online for up to six years, a description of the research, including the student's name, the document's title, the advisor's name (or advisors' names), and the abstract will be available via ProQuest and DRUM, but the actual electronic file will be unavailable for viewing or download until the selected embargo period has passed. This embargo request requires written approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Students must complete this form ([https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/umd\\_embargo\\_request\\_form\\_12-2021\\_0.pdf](https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/umd_embargo_request_form_12-2021_0.pdf)), which includes attaching a letter co-signed by the student and their advisor(s). The letter should briefly justify the request, including a strong rationale for the extended embargo and the specific amount of embargo time requested. In rare circumstances, such time is necessary (e.g., extended patent reviews, publishing monographs, ongoing legal cases related to the project's research, etc.). If a student previously embargoed their work for two years, they can only request an additional four-year embargo. Extensions beyond six years will not be considered except for highly extenuating circumstances (e.g., prolonged illness or caretaking responsibilities, long work deployment that precluded focusing on publication, ongoing legal cases related to the research that prohibit publication, etc.).
- **Request an indefinite online publication restriction of the thesis or dissertation.** In extremely rare cases, students may request an indefinite embargo (a restriction) on electronic access to their document through ProQuest's Digital Dissertations and DRUM. In this case, a description of the thesis or dissertation, including

the student's name, the work's title, the advisor's name, and the abstract will be available via ProQuest's Digital Dissertations and DRUM, but the actual electronic file will be embargoed indefinitely. This embargo request requires written approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Students must complete this form ([https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/umd\\_embargo\\_request\\_form\\_12-2021\\_0.pdf](https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/umd_embargo_request_form_12-2021_0.pdf)), which includes attaching a letter co-signed by the advisor and student. The letter should briefly justify the request. Indefinite embargoes can be placed only in service of a public good (e.g., for national security reasons). This restriction can be lifted at the request of the student at a later date.

## Inclusion of One's Own Previously Published Materials in a Thesis or Dissertation (p. )

A graduate student may, upon the recommendation of the thesis director, and with the endorsement of the home graduate program Graduate Director, include his or her own published works as part of the final thesis. Appropriate citations within the thesis, including where the work was previously published, are required. All such materials must be produced in standard thesis format.

It is recognized that a graduate student may co-author work with faculty and colleagues that should be included in a thesis. In such an event, a letter should be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School certifying that the student's Examining Committee has determined that the student made a substantial contribution to that work. This letter should also note that inclusion of the work has the approval of the thesis advisor and the Graduate Director. The format of such inclusions must conform to the standard thesis format. A foreword to the thesis, as approved by the Examining Committee, must state that the student made substantial contributions to the relevant aspects of the jointly authored work included in the thesis.

## Inclusion of Copyrighted Materials in a Thesis or Dissertation (p. 4)

Students are responsible for ensuring that their thesis or dissertation complies with copyright law. Copyright law gives the owner of a work exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, display or perform the work publicly and to modify or adapt the work and the exclusive right to grant others permission to exercise any of those rights in the work, *subject to certain exceptions*. Students are responsible for determining if their use of another's work requires his or her permission or falls within one of the exceptions. Permission is not required to use a work when:

- The work never qualified for copyright because, for example, it lacked originality or was created by Federal employees in the scope of employment.
- Copyright in the work has expired.
- The use qualifies as a fair use.

Students should consult the following documents for guidance on complying with copyright law:

### Did the work ever qualify for copyright protection?

- Library of Congress, Copyright Basics (<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf>)



- Library of Congress, Ideas, Methods, or Systems (<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ31.pdf>)
- Library of Congress, Blank Forms and Other (<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ32.pdf>) Works Not Protected by (<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ32.pdf>) Copyright (<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ32.pdf>) and Copyright Protection Not Available for Names, Titles, or Short Phrases (<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ34.pdf>)

#### Has copyright in the work expired?

- Library of Congress, Duration of Copyright (<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ15a.pdf>)
- Cornell University, Copyright Term and the Public Domain in the United States (<http://copyright.cornell.edu/resources/publicdomain.cfm>)

#### Is the proposed use a "fair use"?

- Library of Congress, Can I Use Someone Else's Work? (<http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-fairuse.html>)
- University of Washington Copyright Connection, Fair Use ([http://depts.washington.edu/uwcopy/Copyright\\_Law/Fair\\_Use/](http://depts.washington.edu/uwcopy/Copyright_Law/Fair_Use/))

## Corrections to Theses and Dissertations (p. 5)

Once submitted to the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM (<https://drum.lib.umd.edu/>)), the body of a thesis or dissertation may not be changed. Students may, however, request that a dated addendum be appended to their original thesis or dissertation document.

To add an addendum, students must submit:

- A written request to the Graduate School ([gradschool@umd.edu](mailto:gradschool@umd.edu)) to add an addendum to the thesis or dissertation document currently in DRUM.
- The request should include the proposed addendum and a letter of support from the thesis or dissertation chair. The letter of support should confirm that the addendum does not substantively change the content of the document and that all members of the thesis or dissertation committee are aware of the submitted addendum.
- For corrections that arise from the process to review concerns under the the University's policy on scholarly misconduct (<https://policies.umd.edu/assets/section-iii/III-110A.pdf>), the Graduate School will collaborate with the Office of Faculty Affairs on the proper resolution before a thesis or dissertation addendum will be posted. Thesis and dissertation chairs, committee members, and students must adhere to the policy's reporting requirements if there is a concern that a thesis or dissertation may require correction as a result of such misconduct.
- With the written approval from the Graduate School, the thesis or dissertation author should send the proposed addendum and Graduate School approval to the Libraries ([drum-help@umd.edu](mailto:drum-help@umd.edu)) to upload the addendum.

Students who wish to add an addendum to their document on the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Database must contact ProQuest directly at [dissspub@proquest.com](mailto:dissspub@proquest.com) for procedures and fees.

## Non-Thesis Option (p. 5)

For programs offering a non-thesis option, please see the individual program's website.

## Master of Professional Studies (p. 5)

The Master of Professional Studies is designed to allow campus units the flexibility to propose multidisciplinary degree or certificate programs suited to the needs of employees of government or private sector organizations.

The Master of Professional Studies must meet all University of Maryland admissions and degree requirements for the non-thesis master's degree. All courses included in the master's degree or certificate must be approved graduate courses. Offering a course in the program requires the approval from the Department Chair under whose auspices the course is offered. All faculty who teach the courses must be members of the Graduate Faculty.

The 30-credit Master of Professional Studies Degree has the following components:

- A core of at least four courses usually drawn from a current master's degree program.
- Concentrations and electives drawn from a variety of academic unit course offerings to create a coherent multidisciplinary master's degree program.

### ACADEMIC OVERSIGHT AND ADMINISTRATION

The oversight committee should be composed of a full member of the graduate faculty from the "core" area who will serve as the Graduate Director, a second member of the graduate faculty, a representative from the Graduate School, and an administrative manager. Both the Graduate Director and second faculty member must have the approval of their respective department chairs. This committee will provide the academic and administrative oversight for the duration of the degree or certificate program.

Early consultation with the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs and with the Graduate School is strongly recommended to identify any potential challenges and to ensure expedient progress through the approval process. The Graduate School will be the academic home for the Master of Professional Studies and will hold academic oversight responsibility. Academic units may choose to develop and administer their own program or apply to the Office of Extended Studies for these services.

For information about any one of the Professional Master's Program, please visit the graduate programs page (<http://pdc-webapp-lamp27.umd.edu/Catalog/public-programs.php>).