General Graduate Program Requirements

Master’s Degrees

Master’s degrees are conferred upon those who have received the bachelor’s degree from UNO or another institution recognized as giving substantially equivalent undergraduate training and who have complied with the regulations of programs as determined by the Graduate School and individual departments in which major work is taken.

Course Requirements

The minimum requirement is 30 semester hours of graduate work, not over six hours of which are allowed for research and the composition of a thesis. In programs not requiring a thesis, the standard course work requirement is 33 hours. Course requirements are determined by departments but must be approved by the Graduate Council. Graduate credit is awarded for courses numbered 4000G-level and above. Graduate credit is not awarded for courses numbered 4000-level and below. As a minimum, a student must present at least 15 semester hours of work (including not over six hours of thesis credit) in courses numbered 6000 or above. Some departments require more than these minimum standards.

Time Limit

Programs for master’s degrees must be completed within six years. A student may request an extension beyond the time limit with approval from the program and the Executive Director of Graduate School, in consultation with the Graduate Council. Courses over fifteen years old will not normally be considered for an exception. A Request for Extension of the time limit form along with a statement of support from the degree program must be submitted to the Graduate School.

Admission to Candidacy

A student will be admitted to candidacy for a master’s degree only after having attained unconditional graduate standing, completed at least 12 semester hours of work with a B average or better and a B average or better overall, and received approval of the student’s major department for such admission. Formal application must be filed in the Graduate School Office not later than a date announced in the calendar. Acceptance of the application rests with the major professor and the Executive Director of Graduate School. The graduate student must adhere to the program outlined
on the application for candidacy. Any changes must be approved by the department in question and by the Graduate School in writing.

**Foreign Language Requirement**

In some departments a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language (classical or modern) is required of all candidates for the master’s degree. Students should discuss this matter with their major professor as early as possible.

**Thesis**

In most departments the preparation of a thesis is an important element in the program leading toward the master’s degree. A master’s thesis should demonstrate capacity for research, originality of thought, and competency in organization. It must be acceptable in subject matter and exhibit proficiency in composition. Instructions on thesis layout may be obtained at the Office of the Graduate School or on the UNO website (http://www.uno.edu/grad).

Final acceptance of a master’s thesis rests with a special committee of three or more members who are nominated by the chair of the department in which major work is taken and are appointed by the Executive Director of Graduate Programs. The major professor is designated chair of this committee. One member ordinarily represents a minor field.

Upon committee approval, the thesis is to be submitted to the Graduate School for approval of the format. The abstract should contain no more than 150 words. Once the format has been verified, the thesis is to be deposited with the Graduate School in an electronic format. Electronic versions will be housed in the UNO ETD collection maintained by the Earl K. Long Library. Should a student require a personal bound copy, he or she should consult one of the several binderies in New Orleans capable of performing this service.

**Comprehensive and Final Examinations**

After a candidate’s course work is at least substantially complete, the candidate will be required to pass a comprehensive examination. This exam may take the form of a capstone course, portfolio, or other evaluation appropriate to the discipline. Since specific examination requirements vary with individual departments, the candidate should note the catalog entry for procedures involved in preparing for the candidate’s particular examination. For non-thesis students, greater weight is ordinarily given to the result of this final examination, and it is likely to be considerably broader in
scope than that given to students who complete theses. The Executive Director of Graduate School will appoint the examination committee.

Thesis students are required to pass a comprehensive final examination after a thesis is at least substantially complete. The examination may be oral, written, or both oral and written depending upon the requirements of the department concerned. The Executive Director of Graduate School will appoint the final examination committee. Ordinarily this committee is composed of the same faculty members who served as a special committee on acceptance of the thesis. The chair of the major department nominates the members. The major professor serves as chair of the committee. The candidate for degree must be physically present at the defense of the manuscript. In the case of extreme and unusual hardship the examining committee may make alternative arrangements. The results of the examination will be submitted to the Graduate School along with student and committee verification of copyright agreement, manuscript access level and Human and Animal Subject committee compliance.

**Doctor of Philosophy Degree**

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is the highest degree offered by the University. It is conferred only for work of distinction in which the student displays power of original scholarship and only in recognition of achievement and marked ability.

The degree is not awarded solely on the basis of study, extending over any prescribed period of time. Nothing in the following summary of minimum standards should be construed to imply that the degree will be granted merely in recognition of faithful performance of prescribed work. The basic requirements are twofold:

1. To be admitted to candidacy an applicant must exhibit unmistakable evidence of penetrating mastery of a rather broad major field, which is ordinarily done in a general examination.
2. A candidate must prove ability to complete a significant program of original research, which is done in a dissertation embodying creative scholarship and by passing a rigorous final examination. The dissertation must add to the sum of existing knowledge, and it must be presented with literary skill.

The degree must be completed within six calendar years following admission to candidacy, or less, if specified by the individual college or program. Prior work applied to the degree (including transfer and locally-earned credits) must have been completed within nine calendar years immediately preceding the date on which the degree is conferred. An extension may be granted if approved by the Graduate Council.
While the degree of Doctor of Philosophy cannot be earned simply by passing courses, the program of work prescribed ordinarily provides for a minimum of at least 60 semester hours beyond requirements for the baccalaureate degree. Although coursework requirements are concentrated in the student’s major field, a certain amount of work is always required in one or two minor fields. All coursework programs require approval of the Executive Director of Graduate School. Graduate coursework taken at another institution with grades of “A”, “B”, “P”, “S”, or equivalent is not subject to the policy on transfer of credit for the master’s degree and may be included in the program of study, if approved by the program, the student’s advisory committee, and the Executive Director of Graduate School.

Residence Requirement

A doctoral student must earn two consecutive semesters of a minimum of nine hours of residence. The doctoral residence requirement may be met alternatively by three semesters of enrollment at six or more hours, which may be non-consecutive.

The purpose of residency is to provide the doctoral student with significant time for sustained contact with faculty members. An expected outcome is the acquisition of skills of inquiry, an opportunity for research, and the incorporation of professional values into the graduate school experience. Also, it facilitates the creation of a cohesive climate in which inquiry becomes the linking feature of the graduate student experience. In short, residency is expected to be a vehicle for socialization into the shared community of professional life.

Students who are in residence for the purpose of the above requirement are expected to devote all of their energies to graduate study under the direct supervision of a major professor and/or advisory committee.

Qualifying Examination

Early in the student’s program of graduate study the major department will evaluate the prospective doctoral candidate for suitability to pursue the doctoral degree. Each graduate program has its own procedure for this evaluation based upon the requirements of its particular discipline. This evaluation may involve written or oral examinations, performance in coursework, or other means.

Application for Doctorate
A student becomes an applicant for the doctorate by being accepted by a major department. A program of study is required either at the end of the first year of enrollment in the doctoral program or after the Qualifying Examination, if one is required by the program.

**Language Examinations**

Each doctoral program has specific requirements for proficiency in a foreign language or for the mastery of certain equivalent research skills. These requirements should be met as early as possible, in no case later than the application for the general examination. Consult with the graduate coordinator of the program for further information.

**Advisory Committee**

A student who is found to be capable of working toward the doctorate by the department's qualifying procedure will develop a program of study with the advice and help of a dissertation committee. The department chair or designee appoints the committee after consultation with the student and his/her major professor. The Executive Director of Graduate School may serve as an ex-officio member and may appoint additional members. This committee will serve as the examination committee for the general examination and will be appointed by the Executive Director of Graduate School. The committee composition will include at least three members from the major department or a related program.

**General Examination**

An applicant becomes eligible for the general examination after satisfying the language requirement and demonstrating adequate academic and professional aptitudes to the student's advisory committee. The general examination is ordinarily the most rigorous test in the entire program for the doctorate. The examination may be oral, written, or oral and written according to the rules of the major department or program. The content of the examination must be comprehensive enough to demonstrate expert competence over broad segments of the major field and evidence of deep and current knowledge in the student’s chosen specialty as well as evidence of progress in research. In most cases the remainder of a student's time will involve concentrated work on the dissertation and preparation for the final examination.

**Candidacy**
Doctoral candidacy involves formal notification to and certification by the Graduate School that a student has demonstrated superior learning and working capacities and that he/she has completed or very nearly completed all coursework and other formal degree requirements. Normally students will achieve candidacy at least one year prior to completion of their dissertation. Students who have successfully passed the general examination must file for candidacy with the Graduate School Office. The forms are available from the Graduate School website, (http://www.uno.edu/grad), and involve a summary of the student’s course of study including all hours taken and to be taken for graduate credit, the results of the general examination and a listing of the examination committee. The student becomes a candidate after the Executive Director of Graduate School approves his/her General Examination Report.

Dissertation

Candidates normally concentrate most of their energies in preparing their dissertations. The dissertation must demonstrate a mastery of research techniques, ability to do original and independent research, and skill in formulating conclusions that in some way enlarge upon or modify knowledge in their major field. The original results must be presented in a scholarly and literate form. Research involving human or animal subjects must be approved by the Committees on Human and Animal Subjects and verification of approval must appear in the final version of the dissertation.

The form and style of the dissertation should follow the accepted practices of the major field concerned. Additional information about acceptable dissertation layout is available from the Graduate School (http://www.uno.edu/grad). After dissertation committee approval, the student must turn in the dissertation to the Graduate School by the stated deadline for approval of the format. The abstract may contain no more than 350 words. Once the format has been verified, the dissertation must be deposited with the Graduate School in an electronic format. Electronic versions are housed in the UNO ETD collection and cataloged by the Earl K. Long Library. Doctoral students must also complete the UMI Author Agreement Form allowing the student’s abstract and title to appear in the Dissertation Abstract International Index.

Printed copies of a dissertation may be required by the program. Students should consult the graduate coordinator of the relevant department to verify the format and binding stipulations of this copy.

Final Examination
The chair of the student’s major department must file a request in the Graduate School for the final examination at least one to two weeks prior to the examination date. The final examination application is submitted on a form available from the Graduate School website (http://www.uno.edu/grad). The final examination committee will be appointed by the Executive Director of Graduate School and will usually consist of the student’s dissertation committee to which one or more additions may be made as representatives of the Graduate Faculty.

Although the final examination is traditionally conducted as an oral test which is concerned primarily with the dissertation and related problems, the content may be varied in any way the committee decides and may extend into subject matter related to major and minor fields even though well removed from topics suggested by the dissertation. The candidate for degree must be physically present at the defense of the manuscript. In the case of extreme and unusual hardship the examining committee may make alternative arrangements.

Certification

In order to pass the final examination, there must be a minimum of 3 positive votes and no more than one negative vote on a committee with four or more members. The results of the examination, along with the student and committee verification of copyright agreement, manuscript access level, and Human and Animal Subject Committee compliance must be turned in to the Graduate School Office. The candidate will be certified to the Board of Supervisors by the Executive Director of Graduate School as having fulfilled all requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.