

Policy 6-201: Graduate Studies and Degrees, Master of Arts and Master of Sciences

I. Purpose and Scope

(Reserved)

II. Definitions

(Reserved)

III. Policy: General Requirements and Provisions for the Master of Arts and Master of Science Degrees

Candidates for the master's degrees must devote a minimum of 30 semester hours to graduate courses and thesis. Where appropriate, upper division courses may be taken if approved by the student's supervisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School. At least 24 semester hours must be in resident study at the University of Utah and a minimum of 20 semester hours must be in course work with the balance in thesis. Noninteractive distance or telecourse do not satisfy the residency requirement. The candidate is required to maintain a "B" average or better.

A. Supervisory Committee

Unless otherwise approved by the Graduate Council, a supervisory committee consisting of three faculty members is to be appointed no later than the second semester of a student's graduate work. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for a committee in writing. The department chairperson nominates the committee members, one of whom is nominated as chairperson, and the dean of the Graduate School make the appointment.

The committee consults with the student in planning their degree program, master's examinations, and thesis research.

If a supervisory committee finds a graduate student's preliminary work deficient, the student may be required to take supplementary undergraduate courses for which graduate credit will not be allowed.

B. Major Field

A candidate must pursue a course of study consisting of not less than 12 semester hours of course work, excluding thesis, in the candidate's department. In addition, 8 to 12 hours of course work are elected. All course work planned must be approved by the student's supervisory committee.

C. Time Limits

All work offered for the master's degree must be completed within four consecutive calendar years. The dean of the Graduate School can modify or waive this requirement in meritorious cases on recommendation from the student's supervisory committee.

D. Application for Candidacy

During the second semester of graduate work, a student should file with the chairperson of their supervisory committee an Application for Admission to Candidacy for the master's degree. After completion of 75% of course work, the formal Application for Admission to Candidacy for the master's degree should be reviewed by the supervisory committee for approval and then forwarded to the Graduate School for approval by the dean. The application must reach the Graduate School office by the last day of the semester preceding the semester of graduation.

E. Transfer Credit

A student who has done graduate work of high grade in another institution of recognized standing may transfer up to six semester hours' credit for such work if it is approved by the student's supervisory committee. However, when a graduate of the University of Utah duly registered for the master's degree is

advised by the supervisory committee to pursue studies for a period of time at another institution because of special facilities available there, such period of study may be considered as residence work toward the degree, provided the arrangement is approved in advance by the dean of the Graduate School.

F. Examinations: Thesis Option

Final Thesis Defense: The required final examination for the M.S. or M.A. thesis option is an oral defense of the thesis. The defense date is set by the supervisory committee and is open to the public. At least three weeks before this final oral examination, the student should submit an acceptable thesis draft to the committee chair; committee members should receive copies at least two weeks before the examination date. After the oral presentation, a question and answer period must be allowed. At the conclusion of the public participation, the committee may excuse the public and conduct further questioning on the thesis and related topics. The outcome of the thesis defense is reported to the Report of the Final Oral Exam and Thesis for the Master's Degree form.

Comprehensive Examination: In addition to the required thesis defense, departments may or may not require a comprehensive examination of M.S. and M.A. candidates in the thesis option. Each department establishes its own policy on the structure of the examination (i.e., written, oral, both; conducted by supervisory committee or uniform departmental exam). The exam may be taken early in the program as a comprehensive qualifying exam, or late in the program as a final comprehensive exam separate from the thesis defense.

G. Examinations: Nonthesis Option

Alternatives to the thesis are permitted by some departments. These alternatives may consist of course work only or involve an independent project. In either case, a final exam that covers breadth and integration of material in the field is required. The examination may be written, oral, or both, and conducted by the supervisory committee or the department. For project-oriented master's degrees

a public oral defense of the project serve as final examination. At its discretion, the supervisory committee may elect to excuse the public from the defense in order to pursue additional questions related to the student's project and field of study. The supervisory committee of the student completing a nonthesis master's degree must sign and submit the Report of the Final Examination for the Master's Degree form to the Graduate Records Office. This form is due by the last day of the semester in which the student expects to graduate. Students may elect to publish and archive their independent projects in the University of Utah Digital Library.

H. Language

Candidates for the Master of Arts degree must demonstrate language competence in a least one foreign language at the level of "standard proficiency." Each candidate's major department will determine the foreign language in which the candidate is required to demonstrate competence. However, departments may establish additional language requirements for the Master of Arts degree. There is no university-wide language requirement for the Master of Science degree, but departments may establish a language requirement for the Master of Science degree.

I. Thesis Regulations

The thesis must represent from 6 to 10 credit hours of the work completed for the degree. The form and distribution for the thesis and abstract as well as the use of restricted data are determined by the Graduate School and published in A Handbook for Theses and Dissertations, available in the Thesis Office. The format of the thesis must be approved by the Graduate School thesis and dissertation editor.

J. Exceptions

Individual student exceptions to the general requirements for the master's degree as stated herein must be approved by the dean of the Graduate School

upon the recommendation of the student's supervisory committee and the respective director of graduate studies or department chair. The Graduate Council may approve departmental or programmatic exceptions to the minimum residency requirements and proposals for new programs or academic offerings using distance learning technologies and/or off-campus sites, as provided by Graduate School policy.

[Note: Parts IV-VII of this Regulation (and all other University Regulations) are Regulations Resource Information – the contents of which are not approved by the Academic Senate or Board of Trustees, and are to be updated from time to time as determined appropriate by the cognizant Policy Officer and the Institutional Policy Committee, as per Policy 1-001 and Rule 1-001.]

IV. Rules, Procedures, Guidelines, Forms and other Related Resources

- A. Rules
- B. Procedures
- C. Guidelines
- D. Forms
- E. Other related resource materials

V. References

(Reserved)

VI. Contacts

The designated contact officials for this Policy are:

- A. Policy Owners (primary contact person for questions and advice): Dean of Graduate School

- B. Policy Officers: Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Sr. Vice President for Health Sciences.

See University Rule 1-001 for information about the roles and authority of policy owners and policy officers.

VII. History: Approved:

Renumbering: Renumbered as Policy 201 Rev 4 effective June 14, 2014, formerly known as PPM 9-9.1

Revision History:

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Earlier Versions:

Revision 4 effective dates December 9, 2002 to June 9, 2014

Revision 3 effective dates July 10, 1995 to December 8, 2002