

Description & Criteria for Degree with Distinction

Degree with Distinction in Research, Scholarship or Creativity in the Arts

Guidelines:

A degree with distinction in research, scholarship or creativity in the arts is an honor that recognizes a student for outstanding accomplishments in research and/or other creative endeavors. Students majoring in any undergraduate degree program that have obtained a minimum of 75 credits, have begun research, scholarship or creative endeavors of exceptional quality, have a minimum GPA of 3.5, and have a faculty mentor may apply for candidacy during their final year before graduation. Candidates must produce a novel body of work that includes publication-quality research data from which to generate a senior thesis or a body of artistic accomplishments that can be displayed and/or presented (exhibitions, recitals, software demonstrations, etc.) as part of an exhibition or performance. Candidates may use research or accomplishments obtained through Independent Research or Study courses, fellowships, internships, and voluntary work toward the degree with distinction. Candidates must present and successfully defend their body of original work, project, or senior thesis to a faculty review committee.

The faculty review committee will consist of the faculty mentor and at least two faculty members who work within a relevant field of study and are qualified to examine the candidate's body of work. Mentors will identify at least two faculty members who are an appropriate fit and are willing to serve on the committee. These recommendations should be included on the application for candidacy. Interested students must submit an application for candidacy to their departmental chairperson or program director at least one semester before graduation, and the candidates must successfully defend or present their work no later than six weeks before the end of the semester in which they graduate. The specific criteria for achieving this distinction will be provided by each department or program. Students awarded the Distinction designation will have such an acknowledgment placed on their transcript and their diploma and will be so recognized at graduation.

Steps Students Must Complete:

1. Find an UMSL faculty mentor willing to guide or accommodate you through your specific creative works. For some disciplines, potential mentors may require students to enroll in independent research or independent studies courses.
2. Begin or continue your research or creative works.
3. Apply for candidacy after you have earned 75 credit hours and before your last semester.
4. Fulfill the requirements for your discipline's senior thesis (if required by your discipline).
5. Maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher.
6. Defend your thesis or body of work and submit the Preliminary Approval for the Degree with Distinction form to your College Dean no later than 6 weeks prior to commencement.