

# **Graduate School, Master's Requirements**

## **Master's Degree Requirements**

### **Admission**

Faculty in each master's degree program determine any eligibility standards beyond the minimum for admission to the Graduate School.

### **Enrollment**

All master's degree students shall be enrolled for credit for access to university resources, including advisement, data gathering, or examinations.

Full-time status for all graduate students is defined as at least nine credit hours of course work. Individual programs may require higher enrollments.

### **Credit Requirements**

A minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate credit is required for all master's degree programs. Specific programs may require a greater number of hours.

### **Residence Requirement**

The final two-thirds of the courses in a master's degree program must be completed at UMSL.

### **Time Limitation**

All courses included in a master's degree program, whether taken at UMSL or at another institution, shall have been completed within six years after enrollment in the first course.

### **Credit from a Certificate Program**

Students who have completed course credits in certificate programs may transfer those credits into a master's degree program with the program's consent, as long as the credits fall within the time limitation set for master's degrees. If the master's degree is in a different program from that awarding the certificate, then no more than one-third of the credits from the certificate program may apply to the master's degree. Multi-disciplinary programs may seek programmatic exceptions to this limit when the program undergoes the approval process.

### **2+3 Programs**

Students who are granted formal admission to a recognized 2+3 program at UMSL are admitted to the Graduate School prior to the completion of their UMSL undergraduate program. These students must complete all the normal requirements for their master's degree. All the coursework used to satisfy the requirements for the master's degree must be taken while in graduate status.

Provisional 2+3 students who are still undergraduates can petition to take up to 6 hours of 4000/5000/6000 level courses for graduate credit, and these credits may be used to satisfy master's degree requirements. The petition must be filed at the beginning of the term. Students may not petition retroactively to use courses already completed as an undergraduate to meet the requirements of the master's degree.

The number of graduate credit hours that may be applied to the undergraduate degree of a 2+3 student shall be determined by the undergraduate department.

The bachelor's and master's degrees must be awarded simultaneously at the end of the 2+3 program. Graduate students who formally withdraw from the 2+3 program may apply for their bachelor's degree. However, the advantage of dual credit is forfeited. No course applied to the bachelor's degree may be included in any future graduate degree program.

### **Accelerated Master's Programs**

Accelerated master's programs allow students to make a smooth transition from a participating UMSL undergraduate program into a master's program and to complete both degrees with fewer total credit hours than would be required if they completed the two degrees separately. These programs represent a cooperative agreement between the Graduate School and the student's undergraduate college.

### **Provisional Admission**

Admission to an accelerated master's program occurs in two stages. Students with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher may apply for provisional admission after earning 60 credit hours (i.e., in the first semester of the junior year) by applying to the accelerated master's program. The application process requires the approval of both the undergraduate college and the Graduate School. Once accepted, the provisional accelerated master's students continue to take the undergraduate courses required for the bachelor's degree, but they need additional advising to plan and schedule the courses that will be counted towards both degrees. Students

must maintain a 3.0 GPA while under provisional status. There is no required minimum number of semesters a student must be in provisional status.

### **Formal Admission**

The transition from provisional to formal status is not automatic. Every semester, each provisional accelerated master's student should be evaluated by the department to determine whether the student is ready to make the transition to a graduate student. In addition to requiring a minimum GPA of 3.0, the program should determine whether the student has taken the foundational courses necessary to be successful at the graduate level. At the appropriate time, a provisional accelerated master's student will be recommended by their graduate program director for formal admission to the Graduate School. The application for formal admission as a graduate student must be approved by both the undergraduate college and the Graduate School.

Upon formal admission, the student will be classified as a graduate student, will pay graduate tuition for all enrolled courses, and must continue taking courses with graduate status until completion of the master's degree. A student admitted and classified as a graduate student cannot revert to undergraduate status.

Graduate students who become inactive in the accelerated master's program by failing to enroll for classes for one calendar year may apply to be readmitted to the graduate degree program. However, the advantage of dual credit is forfeited. No course applied to the bachelor's degree may be included in any future graduate degree program.

### **Graduate School Requirements**

Once admitted to the Graduate School, the student must meet all of the requirements for the master's degree. No graduate degree requirements are waived for accelerated master's students. Only courses taken with "graduate status" may be used to meet the requirements for the master's degree.

Graduate courses completed by undergraduate students who have been provisionally admitted to accelerated master's program will be charged at the undergraduate tuition rate; however, these courses will have "graduate status" and will count toward the master's degree to which the student was admitted in the accelerated master's program. Note that these "graduate status" courses taken as an undergraduate cannot count towards any other future graduate degree program

outside of the specific accelerated master's program to which the student has been admitted. These courses must be approved before the semester starts.

The maximum number of graduate credits taken as a provisionally admitted undergraduate student that will count towards a master's degree is 12. Programs may allow fewer credits. The master's degree will be awarded based on the normal degree requirements.

### **Graduate Courses Used for the Bachelor's Degree**

The undergraduate academic unit determines which of the courses taken with "graduate status" taken for graduate credit will count towards the 120 credit hours required for the bachelor's degree. Generally, appropriate 5000/6000 level courses in the discipline are used to replace some 4000-level courses in the regular undergraduate curriculum.

### **Awarding of the Degrees**

The bachelor's degree is awarded when the student has met all the requirements for the undergraduate degree. The undergraduate advisor and college approve the degree and coordinate with Registration to confer the bachelor's degree.

The master's degree is awarded when the student has met all the requirements for the master's degree. The graduate advisor, graduate program director, and Graduate School approve the degree and coordinate with Registration to confer the master's degree.

### **Dual Master's Degrees**

With approval of the program and the Graduate School, students who have completed one master's degree may transfer appropriate credits to a second master's degree program. The number of transferable credits may not exceed one-third of the credit hours required by the second program. Subsequent transfers of the same courses to a third degree are not permitted.

With approval of the programs involved and the Graduate School, students may simultaneously pursue two master's degrees under the following conditions:

1. No more than one-third of the credit hours required by either program may be applied to both programs;

2. Students must obtain approval of both programs before completing 12 hours in either program.

Multi-disciplinary programs may seek programmatic exceptions to the one-third limit when the program undergoes the approval process by addressing specific allowable transfers between those two degree programs.

### **Master's Degree for Doctoral Students**

Doctoral students may receive a master's degree in their program for work they have completed toward to a doctoral degree. The program establishes the requirements for such a master's degree. However, the requirements should, in principle, be similar to those for master's degrees offered by the program.

Doctoral and educational specialist students may also receive a master's degree for work they have completed toward to a doctoral or Ed.S. degree in another program provided:

1. they apply no more than two-thirds of the master's degree courses to their doctoral degree program;
2. they have been admitted to the master's degree program; and
3. they have obtained the approval of the advisors from both programs and from the Graduate School.

Credit from the master's degree must constitute less than half the total credits required for the doctorate.

Multi-disciplinary programs may seek programmatic exceptions to these limits when the program undergoes the approval process.

### **The Master's Degree Program**

Master's degree students must meet with an advisor within the first semester of the program to design a program plan that meets program requirements and the students' interests.

To receive the master's degree, students who have met all degree requirements shall apply for graduation by filing an M-4 graduation application, which will include the student's degree program, no later than the graduation deadline in the semester in which they plan to graduate.

## **Comprehensive Examination, Scholarly Paper, or Exit Project**

Each unit requiring a comprehensive examination for the master's degree informs the Graduate School of (a) the number of times the unit will allow its students to take a comprehensive examination, and (b) the period of time that the unit will allow between the first and final attempt to pass the examination.

Units recommend graduate faculty members to serve on committees for capstone projects. The graduate dean shall review and may appoint the committee.

Graduate program directors recommend at least two graduate faculty members to serve on committees for capstone projects and examinations. The graduate dean shall review and appoint the committee.

Programs that offer alternatives or requirements for capstone projects or examinations are expected to post procedures that have been approved by the department. Graduate program directors shall inform the Graduate School when the department initiates or changes their procedures.

The chairperson of the capstone committee is responsible for verifying that the final project or examination is acceptable to the committee and the graduate dean by submitting current Graduate School forms for documenting those approvals. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to grade the project/examination.

## **Master's Thesis**

The master's thesis committee shall consist of at least three members of the graduate faculty who can contribute their expertise to the thesis study. The committee chair and at least one other member shall be faculty in the department offering the degree. The graduate dean shall review and approve the committee membership and any changes in membership.

The thesis must be written on a subject approved by the candidate's thesis committee and must be the candidate's own work. The reuse of text from previous papers authored or co-authored by the student shall be evaluated by the committee prior to the thesis defense. In the thesis, the student must clearly and explicitly identify all reused text and the original source(s) of that text. If the source documents involve co-authors other than the student and the faculty advisor, the thesis must include a description of the individual contributions of each co-author of the original study. A copy of the source documents must be provided to thesis

committee members and the Graduate School. Departments may choose to adopt a uniform policy on the acceptability of reused text for a specific degree program.

Regardless of the extent of any reuse of text, the thesis must maintain a uniform and consistent formatting style throughout. In matters of style and documentation, the custom of the discipline shall be followed. The student must document permission to reuse any copyrighted material.

The final defense of the thesis is normally open to the public unless the thesis chair requests that the dean of the Graduate School permit a closed meeting on the basis of an embargoed study. Deliberations among committee members may be closed at the discretion of the chair. After deliberating on the defense of the thesis, the master's thesis committee shall vote on whether the defense was successful. The defense shall be deemed unsuccessful if there are two negative votes, even if outnumbered by positive votes. An abstention will be considered a negative vote. A student failing the defense shall have the opportunity for one additional presentation before the same committee. The master's thesis committee shall determine the timing and format of the subsequent defense. The master's thesis committee makes the final decision on the defense, whether pass or fail, and reports the results to the graduate program director, who informs the Graduate School no later than two days after the defense.

Master's degree students shall disseminate the thesis according to current Graduate School procedures. The final copy of the thesis must be typed according to current Graduate School requirements. To be accepted by the Graduate School, the copy must be legible, neat, and paginated correctly. An abstract is required. Students must submit to the dean of the Graduate School one copy of the thesis by the posted university deadline, normally six weeks before the end of the term in which graduation is sought. The chairperson of the thesis committee is responsible for verifying that the final draft of the thesis is acceptable to the thesis committee and the graduate dean by following current Graduate School procedures for documenting those approvals. The chair of the thesis committee shall determine the grade for the thesis.

**Justification for request:**

Several graduate programs currently offer a 2 + 3 program that allows students to use six credit hours towards both the bachelor's degree and the master's degree. However, students either do not enroll in the program or drop out because the bachelor's degree is not awarded until the master's degree is completed. The Accelerated Master's program will allow students to be awarded the bachelor's degree upon completion of the undergraduate degree requirements,

before the master's degree is awarded. Further, the Accelerated Master's program will allow students to use up to 12 credit hours toward both the undergraduate degree and the master's degree.