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Graduate Division
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UCIRVINE | GRADUATE DIVISION ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY & FINAL REPORT FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR COMPLETING APPLICATION FOR ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

NOTE: Much of the text below is adapted from UCI's *Graduate Policies & Procedures*
<https://www.grad.uci.edu/forms/academics/Graduate-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf>

The Master's Degree

Residency Requirements

A minimum of three quarters in academic residence is required prior to the award of most master's degrees, including the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and the Master of Advanced Study (MAS) degrees. Six quarters in academic residence are required for the Master of Fine Arts degree programs (with the exception of Art and Drama, which requires nine quarters) and the M.B.A. program in the Paul Merage School of Business. A minimum period of study of one quarter in-residence must intervene between formal advancement to candidacy and the conferring of the Master's degree (SR 682).

Curricular Requirements

The requirements listed herein are the minimum required by the University of California. Most master's degree programs require additional work. Detailed information on specific degree requirements can be found in UCI's Graduate Policies & Procedures handbook, and on individual department websites. Students are responsible for fulfilling requirements in effect the year in which they are admitted. Under certain circumstances, the student, with the written approval of the faculty advisor and school's associate dean for graduate affairs, may opt to accept the new requirements. In such cases, the academic unit must notify the Graduate Division in writing of the change in order that the student's records correctly identify the new requirements.

The following regulations of the Academic Senate, Irvine Division, apply to curricular requirements for students in Master's programs.

a. **Coursework Requirements and Thesis and Examination Options**

(Irvine Regulations [IR] 805/810/830/835) <http://www.senate.uci.edu/manual/toc/Part2Chapter3.asp>

1. (IR) 805 Master's Degree Options

The master's degree is attained by one or two routes: **Plan I**, the **Thesis option**, and **Plan II**, the **Comprehensive Examination** option. A program may adopt one or both plans with the approval of the Graduate Council. Each of these plans has minimal coursework requirements. Programs may also impose additional requirements. With the approval of the Graduate Council, a program may provide for appropriate alternatives to the thesis and/or comprehensive examination requirements which are described in IR 830 and IR 835.

2. (IR) 810 Course Requirements

The minimum course requirement for the master's degree is given below. This requirement may be waived or reduced only on the recommendation of the academic unit in which the degree is earned and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate Division.

Plan I (Thesis)

In addition to the thesis, a minimum of 28 quarter units in approved courses is also required, at least 20 of which must be earned in 200 series graduate-level courses exclusive of credit given for thesis research and preparation. A general examination is also required.

Plan II (Comprehensive Examination)

In addition to the comprehensive examination, a minimum of 36 quarter units in approved courses, at least 24 of which must be from graduate-level courses in the 200 series.

3. (IR) 830 Master's Degree Requirements: Thesis Committee: Plan I

(Approved by Irvine Division May 11, 2000.)

Under Plan I a thesis is required. A committee of three faculty members recommended by the academic unit* and appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Division shall approve the subject, pass on the content of the thesis, and administer the general examination. Usually one of the committee members directs the work.

*Note: Definitions of Academic Unit

- a) Department.
- b) If "a" fails, Interdisciplinary Program.
- c) If "a" and "b" fail, the graduate program which oversees the student's progress.
- d) If "a", "b" and "c" fail, the School.
- e) In cases where multi-campus programs are involved, the same definitions will apply across all campuses relevant to the program.

Thesis Committee Membership

The thesis committee is comprised of three voting members of the University of California Academic Senate -- not necessarily the Irvine Division -- or the equivalent. A majority of the committee, but not necessarily all, shall be affiliated with the program. The Thesis Committee shall approve the subject of the thesis, pass on the content and administer the general examination. Usually, the Chair of the committee directs the work.

Chair: The Chair of the committee must hold a primary or joint academic appointment in the academic unit/program supervising the master's program; no exceptions will be granted for this position.

General Members: Non-voting members of the Academic Senate will be considered for general membership on the committee on an exception-only basis. The Dean of the Graduate Division, on behalf of the Graduate Council, retains sole authority to grant exceptions. All such requests must be submitted in writing by the Chair of the academic unit to the Dean of the Graduate Division two weeks prior to the examination to allow a reasonable time for review.

Oversight Member: If the Chair, Thesis Advisor or other member of the committee has a financial interest in an outside entity that carries the possibility of a **conflict of interest** that is potentially harmful to the academic interests of the graduate student, an Oversight Member must be appointed in addition to the two general members. It is understood that the Oversight Member shall not bear a possible conflict of interest potentially harmful to the graduate student in the discharge of his or her role as Oversight Member. See exceptions below for procedures to appoint an Oversight Member.

Role of Oversight Member: The Oversight Member shall participate on all student research advisory and/or thesis committees. An additional role of the Oversight Member is to be fully cognizant of the issues related to the possible conflict of interest and its potential impact on the student, and to be fully cognizant of the UCI resources available should a conflict of interest problem arise. If there do not appear to be any harmful results from the conflict of interest, the Oversight Member shall sign a statement to that effect after each committee meeting and the statement shall be placed in the student's file and a copy forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate Division. If the Oversight Member perceives that there is a problem arising from conflict of interest issues, then he/she shall not sign off on the committee deliberation, but shall instead inform the Dean of the Graduate Division of this apparent problem in writing.

Procedures for Appointing Members to Thesis Committee

The qualifications of all committee members must be evaluated and approved by the academic unit Chair or designee. When the membership of the proposed committee conforms to Senate policy as defined in this regulation, the Dean of the Graduate Division, on behalf of the Graduate Council, may delegate to the academic unit the authority to appoint, evaluate, and approve the committee. When the proposed membership deviates from this policy, as in the case of non-voting Senate members or faculty members from other universities, or in the case of appointment of an Oversight Member, a request for an exception must be submitted in writing to the Dean of the Graduate Division.

Exceptions on Appointments to Thesis Committee

Oversight Member: The Dean of the Graduate Division shall select the Oversight Member from a list of three nominees agreed upon by the student, the faculty research advisor, and the departmental representative. If these individuals cannot agree on three nominees, the departmental representative (either the graduate advisor or the chair if the advisor is conflicted) will select the nominees. The departmental representative shall submit a written request to appoint an Oversight Member to the Dean of the Graduate Division no less than two weeks prior to the date of the exam to allow a reasonable time for review. This request should include background information describing the circumstances of the possible conflict. The Dean of the Graduate Division will retain sole authority to appoint the Oversight Member. No exceptions to this requirement will be considered.

General Member: Non-voting members of the Academic Senate and faculty members holding professorial titles from other universities will be considered for general membership on the committee on an exception-only basis.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the academic unit, the Departmental Faculty Advisor, Mentor or Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs as appropriate, and the Chair of the Candidacy Committee: (1) to inform the student regarding the policy on Thesis Committees -- including full disclosure of issues pertaining to possible conflict of interest that is potentially harmful to the academic interests of graduate students; (2) to provide graduate students with a policy statement on such possible conflict of interest prior to the student designating a research topic, forming a graduate committee, or being employed as a research or teaching assistant, whichever event occurs first; and (3) to ensure that these Academic Senate policies are followed.

4. (IR) 835 Comprehensive Examination (Plan II)

A final comprehensive examination, the nature of which is to be determined by the academic unit and approved by the Graduate Council, is required of candidates following Plan II. The content of the exam represents a capstone requirement that integrates the intellectual substance of the program.

b. **Advancement to Candidacy**

Senate Regulation 320

Graduate students are such graduates of the University (or of other institutions empowered to confer like degrees on an equivalent basis) who are pursuing advanced or special studies under the direction of a Graduate Council. Graduate students may be resident graduates not candidates for a degree, or they may become candidates for higher degrees. All graduate students are considered resident graduates not candidates for a degree, unless admitted to candidacy by a Graduate Council after formal application.

In accordance with University of California policy, students must be advanced to candidacy for their degree prior to the beginning of the final quarter of enrollment. An application for Advancement to Candidacy initiated by the student and/or Department and approved by the academic unit should be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate Division via the official Graduate Division DocuSign form at least 30 days before the opening of the quarter in which the degree is expected. The *Application* must be accompanied by petitions for any course credits that have not already been approved by the Dean of the Graduate

Division. If the master's degree requires a thesis (Plan I), membership of the thesis committee must be included.

Deadlines for submission and approval of the *Application for Advancement to Candidacy* are published on the Graduate Division website each quarter. If the candidate is not advanced before the beginning of the quarter in which all requirements are completed, the degree will not be conferred until the end of the following quarter. When the student is formally advanced to candidacy, the student and the academic unit are notified.

c. Final Report for the Master's Degree

It is the graduate program's responsibility to ensure that the course requirements of the graduate program have been met as well as collecting and attaching the Master's Exit Survey <https://apps.grad.uci.edu/exitsurvey/> confirmation e-mail prior to submitting the Final Report for the Master's Degree to the Graduate Division. Academic units are encouraged to consult the *Program Summary* applicable to the student's year of admission for each degree program offered by their graduate department. Substitutions within the graduate student program of study do not need to be approved through the Dean of the Graduate Division unless they affect minimum University and program requirements for the Master's degree.

For students earning a Master's degree by the comprehensive exam option, the final degree paperwork for the comprehensive exam is submitted to certify completion of all degree requirements prior to formal award of the Master's degree. The section of the form (Conferral of Degree) should be completed as soon as it is possible to certify completion of all requirements. All sections should be completed; if some requirements do not apply, this should be indicated by "Not Applicable" (N/A) in the appropriate space.

If the student has satisfied all requirements except for satisfactory completion of the final quarter's course work, the department should complete the certification, attach the Master's Exit Survey confirmation e-mail and return both to the Graduate Division prior to receipt of final grade reports. The awarding of a "provisional" or "terminal" degree should be indicated by marking the "Yes" or "No" boxes. The Graduate Division will verify final grades with the Registrar. If the Master's Exit Survey confirmation e-mail is not attached at time of degree conferral submission, the degree paperwork will not be accepted. The department is consulted if there is any doubt about conferral of the degree.