

Master's Degree Academic Program Overview

The master's degree is awarded in recognition of academic accomplishment as demonstrated by a program of course work, passing of the required examinations, or the preparation of a thesis, project or essay.

Master's Program Planning Form

Master's degree students must complete the Master's Program Planning Form with their adviser, have it approved by their adviser and the director of graduate studies or chair, and submit it to the Graduate School before the end of their first term of study. A hold will be placed on the records of students who do not submit the form in their first term of study, preventing their enrollment in future terms. The form is available online at the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml). This form constitutes a formal agreement between students and the university and outlines what must be done to complete the master's degree. It may be changed by submitting a revised and approved Master's Program Planning Form.

Second Language Requirements

Some programs require reading comprehension in one or more additional languages. This requirement is used as an important tool to advance the scholarly and research efforts of students. To determine language requirements for a specific program, consult the Programs section of this bulletin.

There are a number of ways by which students can complete the language requirement(s), including: taking a second language proficiency examination administered by the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures; taking a three-credit, semester-long second language reading knowledge course (course number xxxx 6204) offered by the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures; proving to the students' departmental faculty that they have the necessary second language proficiency as evidenced by prior language study; or by taking an exam prepared and graded by the students' academic departments. The 6204 reading knowledge courses may only be taken for credit and may not be audited.

If students choose to take a second language reading knowledge course, the tuition for the course is charged at the normal Graduate School tuition rate in effect at the time the course is being taken, and the language credits are in addition to regular course credits required for that academic program and degree. The grades earned in the second language reading knowledge course are included in the students' term and cumulative credits and grade point average.

Students also have the option of taking a two-hour exam to fulfill a graduate degree program's language requirement. The exam, graded SNC/UNC, assesses students' reading proficiency in a particular language through translation and comprehension questions about a second language passage. Students must register for the exam just like a regular course, and a \$100 fee is assessed. If students receive an unsatisfactory grade assessment, it is recommended that they complete the corresponding 6204 reading knowledge course. If students decide to retake the exam outside of the course, they have to reregister for the exam and pay the \$100 exam fee.

Whatever method is chosen, it is the responsibility of the students' home departments to determine what level of language proficiency is sufficient. It is also the departments' responsibility to notify the Graduate School of each student's completion of second language requirements.

Specializations

A specialization (or sub-plan), consisting of a minimum of twelve credits of course work in a specific field, may be required for some master's programs. When a specialization is required, it must be selected from those currently active within approved Marquette University programs. The specialization must be outlined on the Master's Program Planning Form, found on the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml). For additional information, consult the Programs section of this bulletin.

Comprehensive Examinations

Candidates for a master's degree in many departments must successfully pass a comprehensive examination on their total graduate program of studies. If students fail, a second and final examination may be given at the discretion of the department, as each department administers its own comprehensive exams.

Students are encouraged to contact their program for specific information including deadlines and procedures. A department may require students to complete a specific course instead of passing a comprehensive exam. Generally speaking, this course may be taken only after students have completed all of the other core course requirements.

Plan A and Plan B

The Graduate School offers the master's degree under two plans: Plan A, which requires that students write a thesis, and Plan B, which substitutes additional course work, a professional project, essay and/or a comprehensive examination instead of the thesis. Some master's programs allow students to choose either Plan A or Plan B. For plans offered in each program, consult the Programs section of this bulletin.

Students may submit a petition to the Graduate School requesting a change from Plan A to Plan B (or vice versa) providing they have permission from their program. A new Master's Program Planning Form, available on the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/), must be completed and submitted to the Graduate School.

If students change plans after completing some or all of the required thesis or project courses, these credits do not automatically apply toward the revised degree requirements.

Plan A — Master's Degree with Thesis

Minimum Credit Requirements

A minimum of 30 credit hours is required and a minimum of 18 credit hours of the course work must be taken in the major field. Some departments require more credit hours; students should consult the Programs section of this bulletin. Courses in the program must be taken at the graduate level (5000-level or above). Consult individual program listings and department advisers to determine the specific requirements for Plan A programs.

Thesis Credits

Students must take six hours of thesis credit. Students who enroll in and pay for thesis credits are not entitled to a refund of tuition for these credits if they should subsequently drop out, withdraw from their program or transfer to a Plan B option.

Thesis Outline Form

Students must submit an outline for the proposed thesis or professional project. (No outline is required by the Graduate School for writing a master's essay, although some departments may choose to require the form.) The outline lists the committee members which, for a master's thesis, must contain a minimum of three voting members. Master's thesis outline forms are available online at the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/).

Master's Thesis

Although there is no Graduate School requirement that students hold a formal, public defense, it is expected that some type of defense of the thesis be held. The format of this defense is determined by the department. Whatever format is used, the results of the defense must be reported on the Master's Thesis/Essay/Professional Project/Publication Approval Form, available at the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/). The defense is considered successful, and students passed, if a majority of the voting members of the thesis committee vote to approve the defense and the department chair signs to accept any non-unanimous vote.

In a master's thesis, students demonstrate familiarity with the tools of research and scholarship in their major field, show thorough knowledge of the subject covered and reflect independence of thought, critical insight and originality. The thesis must also be acceptable in style and composition. Students are required to follow the instructions on the Thesis Directives and thesis submission checklist, available online at the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/). A thesis that does not conform to the directives, including format specifications, is not accepted by the Graduate School.

An electronic copy of the completed master's thesis must be submitted online through ProQuest, on or before the deadline listed in Marquette's Academic Calendar. Although students retain ownership and copyright privileges, a copy of the approved thesis is considered a public document by Marquette University. The thesis may be placed in the Marquette University library, used by students and faculty, or otherwise released to the public unless restricted by the author. See the electronic theses and dissertations website (<http://www.marquette.edu/grad/etd.shtml/>) for details.

Recording Thesis Defenses

In order to facilitate an open and honest dialogue, thesis defenses are not normally recorded. However, it is the policy of the Marquette University Graduate School to allow, with prior permission, the audio and/or video recording of students' thesis defense.

Common courtesy requires that the thesis committee chair and all committee members must be made aware, in advance of the defense, of students' desire to record the proceedings. Additionally, the chair and all committee members must assent to such a recording. Such written approval must include the signatures of the chair and all committee members, and the signed approval must be submitted to the assistant director for student records in the Graduate School prior to the recording being made.

If a thesis defense is recorded, all questions, statements or other comments, whether verbal or written, remain the property of the person who spoke or wrote them, and any future use of the recording is subject to applicable copyright laws.

Plan B — Master's Degree Without Thesis

Minimum Credit Requirements

A minimum of 30 credit hours is required and a minimum of 18 credit hours of the course work must be taken in the major field. Some departments require more credit hours; students should consult the Programs section of this bulletin. Courses in the program must be taken at the graduate level (5000-level or above). Consult individual program listings and department advisers to determine the specific requirements for Plan B programs.

Professional Project Credits

Academic units may require students to register for project credits or similar course work. Students who enroll in and pay for project credits are not entitled to a refund of tuition of these credits if they should subsequently drop out of or be withdrawn from their programs.

Professional Project

In a project, students demonstrate familiarity with the tools of research and scholarship in the major field, show thorough knowledge of the subject covered and reflect independence of thought, critical insight and originality. The project must be acceptable to the department in style and composition. Formatting of professional projects is at the discretion of the department. Thesis Directives, found on the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/), may be used as a guide.

An electronic copy of the professional project and the original Master's Thesis/Essay/Professional Project/Publication Approval Form with appropriate signatures must be submitted to the Graduate School office on or before the deadline listed in the Academic Calendar.

Essay

In many graduate programs, a master's essay may be required even though no formal credit is given for it and no outline is required by the Graduate School. Students should confer with their advisers about topics and guidelines for producing an acceptable paper, including requirements for length and references. Essays must be acceptable to the department in style and composition. Formatting of essays is at the discretion of the department. Thesis Directives, found on the Graduate School forms website (http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/), may be used as a guide.

An electronic copy of the essay and the original Master's Thesis/Essay/Professional Project/Publication Approval Form with appropriate signatures must be submitted to the Graduate School office on or before the deadline listed in the Academic Calendar.