

**3341-3-16 Master's degree - General Requirements- Graduate.**

Applicability	All University Units – Graduate Students
Responsible Unit	Office of the Provost
Policy Administrator	Graduate College

**(A) Policy Statement and Purpose**

This policy describes general requirements for Master's degree. More specific requirements can be found on department documents.

**(B) Policy****(1) General Requirements for the Master's Degree****(a) Types of Programs**

The specific descriptions of the respective master's degrees are given under the subheadings of Master of Accountancy, Master of Architecture, Master of Arts, Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Business Administration, Master of Education, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Food and Nutrition, Master of Interdisciplinary Gerontology, Master of Music, Master of Organization Development, Master of Public Administration, Master of Science, Master of Science in Analytics, Master of Science in Criminal Justice, and Master of Technology Management. Degree requirements are outlined under the degree headings listed above and in the program descriptions in the "Graduate Programs" section of this catalog. In several of the programs, students may pursue the degree under either a thesis option (Plan I) or a non-thesis option (Plan II). Students present their intention to pursue either a Plan I or a Plan II master's degree program at the time of submission of the TDP/DARS form to the

Graduate College. All master's degree programs have a culminating option (e.g., thesis, project, comprehensive exam, presentation, final project, recital, portfolio, etc.).

(b) Credit Hours

All master's degree programs of the university require at least thirty semester hours of graduate course work. Specific credit hour requirements are listed under the degree and program descriptions. Students must be enrolled for at least one hour of credit in the semester in which they graduate. A student who completes all degree requirements by the end of the first day of the semester in which he or she is graduating is not required to register during the graduation semester.

(c) Level of Work

At least eighteen hours of credit in the student's master's degree program must be on the 6000-level or higher. Many 5000-level courses are cross-listed with 4000-level undergraduate courses. A graduate student must register for the 5000-level section of the course.

(d) Residence Requirements

A minimum of twenty-four hours toward the master's degree must be earned at Bowling Green State University. Exceptions to this minimum pertain to approved Joint and Cooperative Degree Programs with another university (cf. p. 51, section entitled "Joint and Cooperative Degrees). In Joint and Cooperative Degree programs, up to eighteen credits may transfer. Credits earned at BGSU Firelands extension branch may apply toward the requirements for the master's degree only when the extension course is specifically given for graduate credit. Transfer credit must be in addition to the minimum of twenty-four hours earned in residence. Unless a degree program has been specifically approved by the Ohio Board of Regents as an off-campus graduate degree program, the individual student must complete at least fifty-one percent of graduate course work on the main campus of

the university, as distinguished from BGSU Firelands branch campus or another off campus extension center.

(e) Time Limits for Degree and Revalidation

Candidates must complete all requirements for a master's degree within six years from the end of the earliest course used to fulfill degree requirements on the TDP/DARS. Course credits older than six years will not apply unless submitted for revalidation. Courses older than seven years may not be revalidated.

(i) Suggested Timeline for One-year Master's Students:

- (a) August - Start Classes
- (b) January - Major professor assigned, TDP/DARS completed, Human subjects approved (if necessary), Thesis topic approved
- (c) May - Apply for graduation, Give final thesis draft to committee, Plan I: take oral thesis exam, Plan II: take comprehensive exam
- (d) August - Graduate

(2) Plan Options For Master's Degrees

The two plans under which one may pursue a master's degree are designed to meet the individual needs of students who aspire to varying types of professional careers. In a sense, Plan I (thesis) and Plan II (non-thesis) represent different experiences. Consequently, the academic departments and the Graduate College discourage switching from one plan to another.

If a student wishes to change from one plan to another after the TDP/DARS has been filed, the student's request to switch must be submitted as a TDP/DARS addendum to the graduate coordinator. If approved, the graduate coordinator submits the approved TDP/DARS with written rationale from the advisor to the dean

designate of the Graduate College. If a switch from Plan I to Plan II is recommended and approved, the grade of IP (in progress) will remain for all thesis hours listed on the transcript.

A graduate student may not switch from Plan I to Plan II if he or she fails the final thesis examination. A graduate student may not switch from Plan II to Plan I if he or she fails the non-thesis evaluation (e.g., comprehensive exam, presentation, final project, recital, portfolio, etc.).

(3) Selecting Plan I or Plan II

(a) Plan I: Master's Thesis

The steps involved in completing a thesis generally include: proposal submission; proposal approval; research and analysis of findings; preliminary draft submission to committee; changes, additions, and corrections; final draft submission and committee approval; final examination or thesis defense; and submission of original, error-free copy (MFA – Creative Writing submit abstract only) to the Graduate College via OhioLINK.

Students must be aware of the policies related to the thesis submission process established by the Graduate College and published on the Graduate College web site. Specifically, the following procedures should be followed:

- (i) The final, error-free thesis must be electronically submitted via OhioLINK by the published deadline.
- (ii) A signed Thesis/Dissertation Defense & Manuscript form (ETD Submission form) on file in the Graduate College by the published deadline.

(b) Thesis Committee

Each student is responsible for forming a thesis committee at the same time approval of the thesis topic is requested. The committee is composed of the thesis advisor (also called the major professor) and a minimum of one other member from the graduate faculty of the student's program. A faculty

member cannot be required to be on a thesis committee. Not all professors are members of the graduate faculty; students should consult their graduate coordinator to determine who is eligible to be on or chair a committee. Any changes in committee membership must be approved by the graduate coordinator and filed with the Graduate College.

(c) Approval of Thesis Topic

A thesis is required under Plan I for the degrees of Master of Arts, Master of Education, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Food and Nutrition, Master of Public Administration, Master of Science, and Master of Science in Criminal Justice or Master of Technology Management. A thesis may be required for the degree of Master of Music, depending on the field.

The thesis topic should arise out of the student's personal exploration in the field of study. The formal petition for approval of the thesis topic must clearly set forth the problem, the intended organization, and the methods of development of the thesis. After approval by the student's committee and graduate coordinator, the thesis topic must be filed with the student's department and the petition of topic approval submitted to the Graduate College. A student must have a minimum grade point average of three point zero in all graduate work at the time of application for thesis topic approval. For more details, consult the Thesis and Dissertation Handbook.

Depending upon the field and the type of degree sought, the thesis may represent a specifically limited piece of research, the solving of a complex problem of design, a critical understanding of a sector of knowledge of considerable dimensions, or a thorough critical analysis or completed creative production of a substantial piece of literature or art.

(d) Thesis Drafts and Abstract

A preliminary draft of the completed thesis (defined as a manuscript that answers the stated problem) should be

submitted to the thesis committee by the time a student files the application for graduation.

The final draft of the thesis (defined as the thesis manuscript with content embodying all corrections requested by the committee) should be submitted to the thesis committee sufficiently prior to the date set for the final examination to allow for a rigorous and careful reading of the manuscript by the committee. The graduate coordinator and departmental handbook should be consulted for this deadline. The committee's approval of the thesis and the abstract are certified by the Graduate College at the time of the final examination.

The original, error-free copy of the approved thesis (MFA-Creative Writing submit abstract only) must be electronically submitted to the Graduate College via OhioLINK by the published deadline. Students failing to meet this deadline will not be eligible for graduation that semester. The manuscript must conform to the specifications outlined in the Thesis and Dissertation Handbook.

(e) Final Examination

A candidate for a thesis degree has a final written and/or oral examination conducted by the committee by the published deadline. This examination does not in any way release the student from the regular examinations in courses for which the student has registered.

(f) Minimum/Continuous Registration

A Plan I master's degree student must register for a minimum of three credits of thesis research (6990) as a degree requirement. A maximum of six hours of thesis research may be credited toward a master's degree, but a student is expected to register for as many additional hours as are necessary to complete the work. The minimum continuous registration for a thesis student is one hour of 6990 per semester. When it is determined that a student does not have sufficient thesis hours, the Graduate College, in

conjunction with the student's academic department, will process a registration for the student for deficient hours. The student will be billed by the bursar for all fees related to the registration (i.e., instructional, nonresident fee, general fee, registration, and late fee as appropriate).

Students should begin registering for thesis research (6990) at the time when they begin planning their thesis project. Students who register for thesis research are required to maintain continuous registration in thesis research from one semester to another, unless they are graduating in the summer term, regardless of whether they are in residence at the university until the research is completed and the thesis is accepted by the Graduate College.

Graduate College policy requires that all graduate students be registered for a minimum of one semester hour during the term in which they graduate (fall, spring, or summer). A student who completes all degree requirements by the end of the first day of the semester in which he or she is graduating is not required to register during the graduation semester.

(g) Plan II: Non-Thesis Option

Plan II master's students are often required to take more courses than Plan I students. In many departments and programs, students must take and pass a comprehensive examination or satisfactorily complete a project not later than two weeks before commencement. The examination usually consists of written essays and takes several hours to complete. In some departments and programs, a special project may be required instead of a comprehensive examination. Any student who fails the comprehensive examination may, upon recommendation of the program's graduate coordinator and approval of the dean designate of the Graduate College, be granted permission to take a second examination. Upon failing a second examination, the student is dropped from the Graduate College.

(4) Interdisciplinary Master's Degree

The interdisciplinary studies degree option is a response to an increasing interest by students and faculty in an interdisciplinary approach to graduate study and scholarship. It is available to students who have been admitted to a master's degree program, but who have unique educational needs that cannot be met within a single degree program. It is limited to those areas in which sufficient faculty and adequate material resources exist to support the proposed course of study.

Any student who has been admitted to a master's degree program and who is interested in pursuing the interdisciplinary studies degree option may develop a proposal under the direction of a faculty advisory committee representing each program or major area of scholarship identified in the proposed interdisciplinary course of study. The course of study must be one that is not available through an existing program, must be at the level (i.e., master's or specialist) of the program to which the student has been admitted, and must combine at least two different graduate degree areas which offer the graduate degree at the master's or specialist level.

The faculty advisory committee must include a minimum of three members of the graduate faculty. Students submit petitions to the Graduate College in accordance with the "Petition for Interdisciplinary Degree Option Guidelines," which are available in the Graduate College. Petitions are reviewed by the graduate dean designate.

The transcript of the master's student pursuing the interdisciplinary degree option will designate the master's degree in the field of Interdisciplinary Studies, with a specialization noted in two or more areas.

An interdisciplinary program can be developed under either a Plan I (thesis supervised by interdepartmental committee) or Plan II (non-thesis) basis.

- (a) Plan I: The program must include a minimum of twenty-eight hours of course credit, plus a thesis (six hours).

- (b) Plan II: The program must include a minimum of thirty-two hours of course credit, plus a comprehensive exam, presentation, final project, recital, portfolio, etc.

(5) Joint Or Cooperative Degrees

“In light of the university’s commitment to preparing students for an increasingly globalized world, departments or programs at BGSU have the option to develop a Joint or Cooperative Degree program with another domestic or international university. According to the RACGS guidelines, “In a joint degree program, two or more universities share the administrative, supervisory, and academic responsibility for the proposed program. Degree authority resides jointly in all participating institutions. Individual institutions do not have independent authority to offer the degree” [“Ohio Board of Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study,” November 30, 2012].

The purpose of the student’s program, pursued at two different institutions of higher education, is to develop one or more of the following: competency in two collateral fields of inquiry; the interdisciplinary ability to integrate the knowledge and analytical skills in two disciplines; or the capacity to integrate academic practices that draw on methodologies in use within two different national or cultural frames of reference, including immersion and developed proficiency in a second language.

In a typical two-year Joint or Cooperative Degree program, the student will spend a full academic year at each of the two institutions. To demonstrate the capacity for an effective integration of the multiple or, where applicable, interdisciplinary approaches, the student must complete the basic core requirements for each curriculum with a minimum three point zero GPA. Either the Plan I or Plan II option is available to the student.

Typically, the Joint or Cooperative degree program will consist of the same number of credits required by the individual master’s program, with fifty percent plus one of the credits issued by BGSU in accordance with the rule mandated by the Ohio Board of Regents. Students on the Plan I track can expect to take up to six credits

devoted to the thesis whereas candidates on the Plan II track will take at least three credits devoted to the research project.

Students in the Joint or Cooperative Degree Program continue to have the option of transferring an additional nine credits as non-BGSU credits when the partner institution offers the master's candidates the option of taking more than seventeen credits during the academic year. Partnerships with non-English-speaking universities may include additional courses in ESOL for foreign students from the partner institution on a case-by-case basis.

In contrast to the Dual Master's degree program, it is the departments or programs in the two universities, participating in the Joint or Cooperative Degree programs that will establish the rationale and program of study (with electives) in conjunction with the Graduate College.

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