

The Master's Degree Program

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The minimum requirements for most master's degrees can be satisfied in one academic year of two semesters or nine months. In practice, however, many students need three semesters or longer. Certain departments have special requirements as outlined in this *Bulletin*. In addition, those students who hold assistantships or fellowships, those who engage in time-consuming work off-campus, or those with scholastic deficiencies of any sort cannot meet all requirements in the minimum time. Also, research is unpredictable and frequently requires more time than anticipated. Certain departments offer a master's degree under two plans, referred to as the Thesis Option and the Non-Thesis Option.

Summary of Procedures for Master's Degree

The student should:

1. Obtain application forms through the Graduate School website and apply by submitting all required materials to the Graduate School by the departmental deadlines.
2. Apply for an assistantship, if pertinent, with the department involved.
3. Become familiar with requirements for the desired degree as outlined in this *Bulletin*.
4. Consult with departmental advisor and become oriented to departmental procedures.
5. Plan schedule of study for the first semester with advisor.
6. Establish an advisory committee through the department head or chair and departmental advisor; usually done during the first semester of course work.
7. Prepare a plan of study worksheet and have it approved by the advisory committee and department head or chair. Submit the Committee, Transfers, Exceptions, and Candidacy (CTEC) Form.
8. Consult with the advisor on approval for the thesis plan, if applicable, and become familiar with the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guide, available through the Graduate School website.
9. Fulfill language requirements, if any.
10. Submit the graduation application through AU Access at least one semester before graduation.
11. Register for at least one course the semester of graduation.
12. Prepare thesis manuscript, if applicable.
13. Arrange for final oral examination with the advisory committee.

Advisory Committee

The student works under the direction of an advisory committee composed of three members recommended by the appropriate department/program head or chair. Two must be members of the Auburn University graduate faculty. Note, only a major professor is required for Master's Non-Thesis, course-only degree options. If change(s) in the committee makeup are required (either chair or member(s)), the committee chair (for committee makeup) and/or department head (for chair changes) should assist the student in identifying replacement members. Please note that a student must have a full committee (committee chair and at least the minimum number of qualified committee members) in order to continue in the program after the CTEC form has been submitted. Committee chair/membership replacements should

be made within one academic term to avoid the student being placed on inactive status (link: <https://bulletin.auburn.edu/thegraduateschool/registration/#Inactive%20Status> (<https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbulletin.auburn.edu%2Fthegraduateschool%2Fregistration%2F%23Inactive%2520Status&data=05%7C01%7Cwitemm%40auburn.edu%7C3dec4ca0b34f435d2dfe08db4cda3008%7Cccb6deedbd294b388979d72780f62d3b%7C1%7C0%7C638188272231877600%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBtil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C&sdata=axDrMiUR1x91Z7nhsJx4IUdskMJsEQ2O1fG4nlW6%2BrU%3D&reserved=0>).

The committee chair (or one of the co-chairs) must be a graduate faculty member in the department/program granting the degree. This committee will approve the student's program of study, plan of study worksheet, conduct required examinations and direct the required field project or thesis. Students in a teaching field (e.g., music education, science education, foreign language education) work under a committee composed of at least two members from the College of Education and one member from a related academic field. The names of the committee members are submitted through the Committee, Transfers, Exceptions, and Candidacy (CTEC) Form. Submit a new CTEC Form if there are changes such as transfer courses and/or exceptions.

Plan of Study Worksheet

Early in the graduate program, each student should confer with the appropriate departmental advisor or major professor to select courses and discuss research interests. Use the program or department's plan of study worksheet to plan for courses, transfer courses, exceptions, requirements, and/or graduation. Once approved, and at least one semester before graduation, submit the Committee, Transfers, Exceptions, and Candidacy (CTEC) Form to the Graduate School. The student is responsible for carrying out the planned program and for asking the major professor to make necessary changes.

Time Limit

All graduate work toward a master's degree must be completed within a period of six calendar years. The student's time to completion begins with the earliest completed course approved for inclusion in the Plan of Study.

Language Requirement

Language requirements for graduate degrees vary with departments. The Department of Foreign Languages offers proficiency courses in a number of languages. The department also offers reading proficiency examinations for those students who wish to demonstrate proficiency without taking a course. Such students must apply to the Graduate School for these examinations by the 15th class day of the semester.

Master's Degree Options

The following general regulations are minimum requirements. The professor or committee in charge of a student's work may require more than the specified minimum in order to achieve a well-rounded program. All programs require a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate courses, 6000-level or above.

The Thesis Option

The master of arts, master of science and master of industrial design are offered under the thesis option. Thesis students register for 7990 Research and Thesis in semesters when working on the thesis, when submitting, defending or awaiting final approval of the thesis, and when taking final examinations.

Major and Minor Subjects

A student under the thesis option must earn a minimum of 30 semester hours, of which at least 21 semester hours must be in a major area of concentration. Depending on departmental requirements or the wishes of the student's advisory committee, the remainder of the course work may be taken within the major field or in a separate but closely related area.

If a student has not met all undergraduate pre-requisites in any field chosen for major or minor work, these should be scheduled as soon as possible, preferably before graduate work begins. The major professor can indicate these on the student's plan of study worksheet.

The topic selected for the thesis must be approved by the student's major professor and advisory committee. The student conducts the research and prepares the thesis under the direction of the major professor. The course, Research and Thesis, is number 7990 in all departments. The student must register for a minimum of four credit hours of this course but may register for as many hours as desired.

No more than six hours may be counted toward meeting degree requirements. The student may register for one or more hours at a time. No grade is assigned for this course.

The Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Guide, which contains information about requirements for the thesis, is available through the Graduate School website. Submission of a thesis is defined as the time at which the first complete draft of such is submitted to the major professor for review. The Graduate School format checks and accepts only theses prepared according to the ETD Guide. The Graduate School Calendar lists the semester deadline for acceptance of final approved theses. If the electronic thesis needs corrections, the student's graduation may be delayed at least one semester. Auburn University reserves the right to make copies of the thesis, but the student retains all publication rights. All theses are published electronically through AUETD and disseminated through ProQuest.

At the discretion of the program, students may be required to pass a comprehensive examination independent of the required thesis defense. If a program requires a comprehensive examination, the program will publish and submit to the Graduate School a description of the scope and form of the assessment (e.g., comprehensive oral or written examination) and the process for appeal or re-examination should the student fail the examination.

The major professor will schedule the thesis defense not later than the deadline indicated in the Graduate School calendar. The thesis defense should be open to members of the graduate faculty as visitors. Successful completion of the thesis defense requires the unanimous support of all members of the advisory committee. If a student fails the thesis defense, one re-examination may be given on the recommendation of the advisory committee and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. Further examinations will be allowed only under exceptional circumstances and with approval of the Graduate Council.

The Non-Thesis Option

At the discretion of the program, students may be required to pass a comprehensive examination. If a program requires a comprehensive examination, the program will publish and submit to the Graduate School a description of the scope and form of the assessment (e.g., comprehensive oral or written examination) and the process for appeal or re-examination should the student fail the examination. Non-thesis graduate students who complete a special project must register for 7980 in semesters when working on the project. Non-thesis students requiring only a final examination register for GRAD 7000 in the semester when the exam is taken. Credit hours for 7990 Research and Thesis cannot be counted toward graduation requirements for non-thesis degree programs.

Master of Arts Degrees

A listing of master of arts programs is available through the Areas of Study, Graduate School website.

Master of Science Degrees

A listing of master of science programs is available through the Areas of Study, Graduate School website.

Special or Professional Master's Degrees

These special or professional degrees are offered: master of accountancy, master of aerospace engineering, master of agriculture (agricultural economics, agronomy and soils, animal sciences, entomology, horticulture, plant pathology, and poultry science), master of applied mathematics, master of aquaculture, master of biological studies, master of building construction, master of business administration, master of chemical engineering, master of civil engineering, master of community planning, master of design build, master of education (curriculum and teaching, educational foundations leadership and technology, health and human performance, and special education, rehabilitation, and counseling school psychology), master of electrical engineering, master of forestry, master of Hispanic studies, master of industrial design (thesis and non-thesis option), master of industrial and systems engineering, master of landscape architecture, master of management information systems, master of materials engineering, master of mechanical engineering, master of probability and statistics, master of public administration, master of social work, master of software engineering, and master of technical and professional communication.

Concurrent Master's Degrees

Auburn University offers a number of approved concurrent master's degree programs, which are specially designed to offer outstanding Auburn graduate students the opportunity to earn two master's degrees in less time and cost than usual by allowing students to double count or share more credit hours than allowed for a second master's degree. A list of approved concurrent master's degrees can be found on the Graduate School website. Such programs require students to be enrolled concurrently in both degrees. They may share up to 9 credit hours if the total hours for both degrees sum to 65 or less. Or they may share up to 12 credit hours if the total hours for both degrees sum to 66 or more. Approval for concurrent programs requires proposal submission by the offering academic unit(s) and review and approval by the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council.

