

GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS



Each advanced degree awarded by the University requires as a minimum the successful completion of a specified number of approved credits of graduate study at the University and the passing of prescribed examinations. Credit hours for a master's or doctoral degree may include formal course work, independent study, research, preparation of a thesis or dissertation, and such other scholarly activities as are approved by the student's program committee and the Graduate School.

*It is the student's responsibility to know the calendar, regulations, and pertinent procedures of the Graduate School and to meet its standards and requirements. These are set forth in this catalog, the *Graduate School Manual*, the *Statement on Thesis Preparation*, and other publications, all of which are available to graduate students at uri.edu/gsadmis. These documents are also available in some department offices. The manual is available at the library and, for a fee, at commercial centers in Kingston.*

These documents govern both master's and doctoral degree programs. The graduate manual gives detailed information on responsibilities of major professors and program committees, examination procedures, preparation of theses and dissertations, academic standards, and the Graduate Student Academic Appeals System.

The requirements immediately following are *general requirements* for all graduate students. *Specific requirements* for individual programs are itemized in the Graduate Programs section that follows.

Program of Study

The purpose of the Program of Study is to ensure that students, at an early stage in their graduate study, organize coherent, individualized plans for their course work and research activities. It is expected that the successful completion of students' Programs of Study along with collateral readings, research, etc., will enable them to demonstrate that they have achieved the high level of competence required of graduate students in their respective fields.

All students matriculated in a graduate degree program are required to prepare a Program of Study with the guidance of their major professors (for master's degree programs) or of their program committees (for doctoral programs) in accordance with the guidelines in the *Graduate School Manual*. After the program has been approved by the major professor or by the program committee, the Program of Study is submitted for approval to the Graduate School.

Course Numbering System

All regular graduate courses are numbered at the 500 and 600 levels. All 900-level courses are special graduate courses for which no graduate program credit is given. Courses numbered at the 400 level are for advanced undergraduates, but may, with approval and to a limited extent, be accepted toward meeting degree requirements at the master's level. For doctoral students who have completed the master's degree in the same field or one closely related, all program work must be at the 500 or 600 level.

Scholastic Standing

Graduate work is evaluated by letter grades. All grades earned will remain on the student's record, and unless the courses were approved for no program credit prior

to registration, all unacceptable grades will be included in calculating the student's scholastic average.

A grade of C+ (2.33) or lower in courses numbered at the 400 level is considered a failing grade. In such cases of failure the course must be either repeated, if it is a required course, or else replaced by another course approved by the student's program committee and the Graduate School. When students receive more than one grade of C+ (2.33) or lower in courses at the 400 level, their graduate status is subject to review by the Graduate School.

Grades of C- or lower are failing grades in courses at the 500 and 600 levels and require immediate review of the student's status. Students failing these courses must repeat them, if they are required courses, or else they must replace them with courses approved by the student's program committee and the Graduate School.

The grades S (satisfactory) and U (unsatisfactory) are used for courses of study involving research undertaken for the thesis or dissertation and for certain courses and seminars so designated. The letter I (incomplete) is used for excused unfinished work. Graduate students have one year to make arrangements with the instructor to remove the incomplete. If the grade of I (incomplete) is not removed within three calendar years, it will remain on the transcript. Incomplete grades may not be used for program credit. Grades of S, U, I, and all grades in courses below the 400 level are not included in the academic average.

To qualify for continuation of degree student status and for graduation, a cumulative average of B (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) in all work is required, except for courses meeting entrance deficiencies or approved for no program credit prior to registration in the course. At any time when the academic record indicates unsatisfactory performance, the student's status is subject to review. A student who fails to maintain a satisfactory grade point average or to make acceptable progress toward the degree may be dismissed as a graduate student.

Degree Requirements

Master's Degree. There are no major or minor area requirements for the master's degree. However, no degree can be awarded for the accumulation of credits without a planned and approved Program of Study. Courses for the degree are expected to be concentrated in the student's field of interest and related areas to produce a well-developed and coherent program.

The requirements listed here must be met within five years after the date the student is first enrolled as a matriculated graduate student at the University. In exceptional circumstances, requests to the Graduate School for an extension of the time limit must be accompanied by an explanation of delay in program progress, a detailed proposed schedule for completing the degree, along with the approval of the major professor and the graduate program director. The dean of the Graduate School will review such requests and determine whether a variance to the time-limit requirement is warranted (see the *Graduate School Manual*, sections 7.42 and 7.51). The master's degree may be earned through full- or part-time study, or a combination of the two.

Some departments offer both a thesis and a nonthesis option, while others offer only one plan. Please refer to the "Graduate Programs" section for specific information on each program. General requirements for these options are as follows.

Thesis Option. The minimum requirements for a master's degree are 1) the successful completion of 30 credits, including six to nine thesis research credits; 2) at the discretion of the department, the passing of written comprehensive examinations toward the end of the course work; 3) the submission of an acceptable thesis and the passing of an oral examination in defense of the thesis. Four copies of the thesis prepared in accordance with Graduate School requirements must be submitted to the Graduate School Office. A statement on the preparation of theses is available from that office.

Nonthesis Option. Depending on departmental requirements, some master's degrees may be earned without a thesis. The minimum requirements for a nonthesis master's degree program are: 1) the successful completion of a minimum of 30 credits; 2) completion of practicums, internships, or other experiences useful to the student's future professional career; 3) registration in one course that requires a substantial paper involving significant independent study; 4) the passing of a written comprehensive examination toward the end of the course work. Some departments may also require a final oral examination.

Research Competency. Although not normally required for the master's degree, a student's major professor or thesis committee may require proficiency in a foreign language, statistics, or computer science where appropriate for the subject chosen.

Professional Degrees. Students should refer to the specific program requirements for professional degrees and consult with the appropriate dean or director.

Doctor of Philosophy Degree. The Doctor of Philosophy degree must be completed within seven years of the date when the student first enrolled as a matriculated student.

The requirements for the doctoral degree are 1) the completion of a minimum of 72 credits of graduate study beyond the baccalaureate degree, of which a minimum of 42 credits must be taken at the University of Rhode Island; 2) the passing of a qualifying examination; 3) if required by the department, proficiency in one or more foreign languages and/or in an approved research tool; 4) the passing of a comprehensive examination; 5) the completion of a satisfactory dissertation; 6) the passing of a final oral examination in defense of the dissertation; and 7) fulfillment of the residence requirement by taking a minimum of six credits per semester (specific graduate programs may require more) for at least two consecutive semesters after satisfying qualifying examination requirements. Residence is interpreted as attendance on campus

or in the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Continuing Education during a regularly scheduled semester. Full-time registration for both terms of a summer session counts as one semester of residence.

The department in which the student studies for the doctoral degree may or may not require a master's degree preliminary to, or as part of, the regular course of study.

Qualifying Examination. This examination is intended to assess a student's potential to perform satisfactorily at the doctoral level. A student without a master's degree who is accepted as a matriculated doctoral student is expected to take a qualifying examination, usually after 24–30 credits have been completed. A student who holds a master's degree in the same or a closely related field is normally not required to take the examination. If an examination is required, it will be stipulated at the time of admission.

Research Competency. Each department, in cooperation with the Graduate School, is authorized to formulate and to amend its own requirements and methods of testing for competency in research tools such as foreign language(s), computer science, or statistics. The department may, in turn, delegate this responsibility to the program committee for each individual doctoral student.

Comprehensive Examination. Each doctoral student will take comprehensive examinations at or near but not later than 12 months after completion of the formal courses stipulated in the Program of Study. The examination is designed to assess the student's intellectual capacity and adequacy of training for scholarly research.

The comprehensive examination consists of two parts: written and oral. The student, with the approval of his or her program committee, applies to the Graduate School to take the examination. The oral examination committee includes the student's committee and two additional members of the graduate faculty appointed by the Graduate School. One of the additional members represents a field of study allied to that of the student's major. The student's major professor arranges for and chairs the examination. Unanimous approval by the examining committee is required for the passing of the comprehensive examination.

A student whose performance fails to receive unanimous approval may, with the committee's recommendation and the approval of the Graduate School, be permitted one re-examination in the part or parts failed, to be taken no sooner than ten weeks and no later than one year after the initial examinations.

Final Oral Examination. This examination is a defense of the dissertation and is open to all members of the faculty and, generally, to all students. The examination, usually a maximum of two hours, is conducted by an examining committee made up of the student's program committee and two additional graduate faculty members appointed by the Graduate School. One of the appointed members will be designated by the dean to chair the examination.

Unanimous approval of the examining committee is required for passing. If the student does not perform satisfactorily, the committee may recommend to the Graduate School that the student take one re-examination under stated conditions.

Theses and Dissertations

For the oral defense, a sufficient number of completed copies of the thesis or dissertation, acceptable in form and substance to each member of the examining committee and the Graduate School, is required. At least 20 calendar days prior to the proposed defense, the copies must be submitted to the Graduate School for scheduling of the examination.

Following a successful defense, and after all changes and corrections have been made, copies prepared in accordance with requirements of the Graduate School and the library must be submitted to the Graduate School. Doctoral students must submit an additional abstract, not exceeding 350 words.

Students are advised to consult the *Statement on Thesis Preparation and Instructions for Thesis Defense*, both available in the Graduate School (and at uri.edu/gsadmis), and the most recent edition of Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, published by the University of Chicago Press.