

# The Master's Degree

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The following general requirements for the master's degree set a minimum standard. With the approval of the graduate dean, specific programs may impose additional requirements.

## Prerequisites

Every master's degree program assumes that participants have a general college education through the baccalaureate level. Accordingly, to enter a master's degree program a student must hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited United States institution or proof of equivalent training outside the United States. The student must also have taken at least 12 semester hours of upper-division undergraduate coursework in the area of the proposed graduate major or must have the consent of the graduate dean. Some areas may require more undergraduate preparation. Students who lack adequate preparation may be admitted to a graduate program on the condition that they complete additional preparatory coursework designated by the graduate advisor. These courses are in addition to the 30 semester hours or more required for the master's degree itself.

## Options

The Graduate School recognizes four options under which a student may pursue the master's degree: with thesis, with report, with recital, and without thesis, report, or recital. All four options may not be available in any one field of study; information about the options that are possible is available under [Areas of Study](#) or from the student's graduate advisor.

For each option, the Graduate School requires at least 30 semester hours of credit. Individual programs may have higher requirements. No more than nine semester hours of upper-division coursework may be included on the Program of Work, and no more than six of these hours may be in the major area. In some degree programs and options, the number of upper-division hours allowed is lower.

At least 18 semester hours must be in the major area; the thesis, report, or recital course, if part of the program, must be in the major. At least six hours must be in supporting work. Supporting work, is a required part of each degree program. It consists of coursework outside the major area, although the Graduate Studies Committee may permit some or all of it to be taken in other areas within the program.

The exact number of hours in the major area and in supporting work is determined in consultation with the graduate advisor. The Graduate Studies Committee must then review and approve the Program of Work, made up of the proposed courses in the major area and in supporting work. Courses listed on the Program of Work may not be more than six years old. The student may earn no more than 20 percent of the hours of credit listed on the Program of Work on the credit/no credit basis; thesis, report, and recital courses are not included in the 20 percent.

**Master's degree with thesis or report.** Each master's thesis or report is developed under the guidance of a supervising committee with two or more members, one of whom is designated as supervisor. The thesis or report is subject to the approval of the committee and ultimately of the graduate dean. The supervisor or co-supervisor must be a member of the Graduate Studies Committee in the major area. In general, all committee members should be members of a Graduate Studies Committee. Occasionally, scholars who hold nonfaculty appointments at the University — research scientists, research engineers, or adjunct faculty members — or off-campus scholars are appointed because their expertise would be valuable to the student. Individuals serving as a member of a thesis, report, dissertation, or treatise committee are generally expected to hold a terminal degree in the field and have an

earned degree equivalent to or higher than the degree being pursued by the candidate. An equivalent record of exceptional professional accomplishment within the field may be considered in lieu of the terminal degree requirement. The composition of the committee is subject to the approval of the graduate dean.

The format of the report or thesis may range from the traditional document authored by a single student to a series of unrelated papers and/or journal articles with multiple authorship. Graduate School policy recognizes that approaches to the report or thesis vary across disciplines, and specifies only that the format chosen for students of a master's program be consistent with practices of similar programs in AAU institutions. Reports or theses containing one or more papers or articles must include brief introductions and conclusions that put the work in context and an acknowledgement of any previous publication of each paper in another report, thesis, dissertation, or other venue. In the case of multi-authored papers, students are allowed to include any portion of multi-authored works in their reports or theses only after receiving the approval of all other co-authors. In addition, a statement must be included explaining the contribution of the student to each paper. When papers or articles that have been previously published are included the report or thesis must include permission(s) of the copyright holder(s) for reproduction in the report or thesis. The supervising committee should review the stated contributions and be satisfied that the student's collective contribution to the multiple-authored papers or articles is sufficient to represent a report or thesis.

The thesis or report is normally written in English. Requests for permission to write in another language pertinent to the research will be granted when there are circumstances warranting an exception. An insufficient command of English is not justification for an exception. The petition from the graduate advisor should include assurance that faculty members competent both in the language and in the field are available and willing to serve on the supervising committee. The request must be approved by the graduate dean when the student is admitted to candidacy. The abstract and a substantial summary and conclusions section in English must be submitted with the thesis.

The student must submit the thesis or report in an approved electronic format to the Office of Graduate Studies. Information about format requirements is available from the Office of Graduate Studies. The thesis or report will be retained by the University Libraries and will be made available to the public through the Texas Digital Library. The student may request permission from the graduate dean to temporarily delay making the thesis or report available to the public in order to protect patent or other rights. This request must be supported by a written recommendation from the supervisor. The graduate dean makes the final decision regarding delayed publication.

**Master's degree with thesis.** Each student's Program of Work must include at least 21 semester hours of graduate courses, including at most six hours of thesis courses. Course 698A (research project) should precede course 698B (writing period); 698A may not be repeated for credit. Both 698A and 698B must be taken on the credit/no credit basis. Students must register for 698B the semester they intend to graduate. In the event that a student completes and submits their Master's thesis while enrolled in 698A, the student will be allowed to add 698B in the same semester in order to graduate. The thesis cannot be accepted before the semester in which the student applies for graduation.

**Master's degree with report.** Each student's Program of Work must include at least 24 hours of graduate courses, including at most three hours of the report course. Students must register for the master's report course on the credit/no credit basis during the semester that they file for graduation.

**Master's degree with recital:** Some students seeking the Master of Music complete a recital rather than a thesis. The student completes the two-semester course Music 698RA and 698RB, Master's Recital, rather than a thesis course. The recital is prepared under the direction of a supervisor, who is chair of the supervising committee, and graded by faculty members from the student's performance area. All other policies affecting the master's degree with thesis apply to the master's degree with recital.

**Master's degree without thesis, report, or recital.** Each student's Program of Work must include at least 24 semester hours of graduate courses. Students must be registered the semester they apply to graduate.