

MASTER'S

How to Earn a Master's Degree

General university and specific degree requirements for UAF graduate programs are described in this section of the catalog, along with requirements for each graduate program. Instructions for applying for admission can be found in the Applying for Admission: Graduate Degree Programs (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/getting-started/admission/#graduatedegree>) section.

ACADEMICS, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Many academic policies and regulations apply to both graduate and undergraduate students. These guidelines are relevant to the student's academic experience at UAF and are important for them to read and understand. Topics include definitions and requirements for official university communications, full- and part-time student status, academic progress, academic dismissal, grading system and policies, FERPA and the student code of conduct. See UAF academics, policies and regulations (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/academics-regulations/>).

GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A graduate advisory committee guides students in developing and completing their degree programs. The student should form the committee and have it appointed within the first two semesters of their study. Committee members for graduate degrees are approved by the appropriate dean, usually upon recommendation of the department head, and by the director of the Graduate School. For interdisciplinary students, the graduate advisory committee chair's home department and college/school will also be the academic home of the interdisciplinary student and the student will follow the procedures of that home department.

The graduate advisory committee's major responsibilities are to formulate a graduate study plan in consultation with the student by the end of the student's second semester in the graduate program; to develop a tentative timetable for completion of all requirements for the degree program; to monitor the student's progress in course work and research; to provide advice and feedback to the student on that progress; to file a Report of Advisory Committee with the Graduate School; to approve, where appropriate, a research topic; to supervise the preparation of the research thesis or project when one is required; to uphold the standards of the college/school and the university; to inform the unit dean, in writing, if a student's performance is inadequate and provide relevant recommendations; and to formulate and conduct the comprehensive examination and other exams as required by the department. The student's advisor (major professor, advisory committee chair) acts as chair of the graduate advisory committee and takes the lead in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Committee Composition

- The advisory committee of master's degree students must consist of at least three approved UAF faculty members. Committee membership must be approved by the home department, unit dean and the director of the Graduate School.
- Retired or emeritus UAF faculty who have an association with the home department may serve on master's advisory committees, upon expressed approval by the home department.
- Faculty from other universities and other professionals who are not employed by UAF may serve as committee members on master's advisory committees upon expressed approval by the

home department. They may not serve as the chair of an advisory committee but may serve as a co-chair.

GRADUATE STUDY PLAN

Graduate students must file a Graduate Study Plan (GSP) with the Graduate School before the end of their second semester in a UAF graduate degree program. The GSP outlines the curriculum of study and a timetable the student must follow in meeting graduate degree requirements. The GSP is prepared by the advisory committee in consultation with the student. It is an agreement of mutual expectations between the student and the faculty committee. The GSP not only contains the specific degree requirements but also indicates the mechanism for fulfilling these requirements (e.g., via coursework, examinations, readings, internships or other supervised experience) and a projected timetable.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Advancement to candidacy formally establishes the graduate student's specific degree requirements. Students may apply for advancement to candidacy for a specific master's degree if they meet the following requirements:

1. They are in good academic standing.
2. Satisfactorily completed at least 9 semester credits of graduate study at UAF (study after admission to a specific degree program).
3. Received approval of a provisional thesis or project topic, if applicable.
4. Received approval of the finalized Graduate Study Plan, including specific coursework to be completed and any other requirements.

Students should apply as soon as possible after meeting the requirements. The application for advancement to candidacy is required at least one semester before the degree can be awarded.

The finalized Graduate Study Plan should be the basis for completing the Advancement to Candidacy form. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the courses identified on the Advancement to Candidacy form. For the purpose of satisfying degree requirements, students must earn a B (3.0) or better (no P grades) in each F400-level course and a C grade (2.0) or better in each 600-level course. A B- is less than a 3.0 and, if obtained in an F400 course, will not count for meeting degree requirements; likewise a C- is less than a 2.0, and if obtained in an F600-level course, will not count for meeting degree requirements.

Admission to graduate study does not imply advancement to candidacy for a degree. The graduate advisory committee has the option of refusing to recommend a student for candidacy.

EXAMINATIONS

Examinations are given in both written and oral form, depending upon the policy of the program unit, the decision of the advisory committee, and the specific examination being taken.

• Placement Examinations

Some master's degree programs have formalized placement exams designed to pinpoint a student's strengths and weaknesses as an aid in developing the Graduate Study Plan. This evaluation is carried out during the student's first semester at the university, preferably in the first month, and may be written, oral, or both.

• Qualifying Examinations

Some master's degree programs require the student to complete a written and/or oral qualifying examination before advancement to candidacy. This examination is an interim evaluation of academic progress; the student may pass unconditionally or conditionally. A conditional pass indicates specific weaknesses that the student must remedy before degree requirements are completed. The Graduate Study Plan and later the Advancement to Candidacy form should include mechanisms for addressing these weaknesses.

- **Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive examination is given to determine whether the student has integrated knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts underlying major and related fields. It may be oral or written or a combination of both.

- **Defense of Project**

Graduate students who are required to complete a project in partial fulfillment of degree requirements must pass an oral defense of project examination. The defense will consist of a presentation followed by questions on the research, analysis and written presentation. All committee members must participate in the project defense.

The graduate project defense examinations are public events and open to the university and the wider community. The student should submit their name and project title and the date, time, and location of their defense examination to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to their defense examination date. The Graduate School, along with the home program, department, college, or school, will advertise the examination.

The defense examination includes a public presentation of the project moderated by the chair of the graduate advisory committee, followed by a private executive examination by the committee.

- **Defense of Thesis Examination**

Graduate students who are required to complete a thesis in partial fulfillment of degree requirements must pass an oral defense of thesis examination. The defense will consist of a presentation followed by questions on the research, analysis and written presentation. The Graduate School will not accept a thesis for final submission until the student has successfully defended it. All committee members must participate in the defense of the thesis. The graduate thesis defense examinations are public events and open to the university and the wider community. The student should submit their name and thesis title, and the date, time, and location of their defense examination to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to their defense examination date. The Graduate School, along with the home program, department, college, or school, will advertise the examination.

The defense examination includes a public presentation of the thesis moderated by the chair of the graduate advisory committee, followed by a private executive examination by the committee.

- **Examination Committee**

In most cases, the student's graduate advisory committee prepares and gives the examinations under guidelines formulated by the faculty of the department in which the degree is being taken. In a few programs, examinations are replaced or supplemented by departmental or school examinations and administered by an established examining committee.

- **Language/Research Tool Requirement**

Proficiency in a second language or a research tool is not a university-wide requirement but may be required by some departments or programs. An advisory committee may specify a language or research tool in addition to the requirements of the program.

The specific language or research tool is determined by the advisory committee, guided by the policies of the administrative unit in which the degree is offered. Generally, competency in a second language is required. However, upon approval of the department or program head, the committee may substitute computer languages, statistics, mathematics, or study in areas such as history or philosophy of science, business, administration, law, or economics. In all instances, the topics selected must support the student's degree program.

CHANGING PROGRAMS

Graduate students may change their program. To change to a program in a different department, school or college (e.g., from an M.S. in civil engineering to an M.S. in biology), the student must submit a new application for admission so faculty in the new degree program can fully review the student's credentials. To change the area of emphasis, add a degree or change the degree within the same department (e.g., from an M.A. in anthropology to a or add a Ph.D. in anthropology, or from a Ph.D. in biochemistry and molecular biology to a Ph.D. in environmental chemistry), the student may change or add programs by completing a change of major form. The form is available from the Graduate School's website. Regardless of when the form is submitted, a change of program doesn't become effective until the beginning of the upcoming fall or spring semester. For more information, contact the Graduate School at 907-474-7464.

GRADUATION

- **Responsibility**

The student is responsible for meeting all requirements for graduation. The Advancement to Candidacy must be received by the Graduate School the semester before they intend to graduate.

- Master's with thesis or project

- The student must be registered for a minimum of 3 graduate-level credits within their discipline the semester that they successfully defend their dissertation and plan to graduate.

- If the student has already successfully defended but missed the previous semester's graduation deadline, then they must be registered for a minimum of 1 graduate-level credit within their discipline the semester that they plan to graduate.

- Master's with non-thesis/non-project

- The student is not required to register for the semester within which they plan to graduate.

For additional information on the steps or paperwork required to graduate for all master's programs, please visit the Ready to Graduate webpage (https://www.uaf.edu/gradschool/students/ready_to_graduate/).

- **Application for Graduation**

The student must file an application for graduation and a nonrefundable fee with the Office of the Registrar. The Graduate School encourages the student to work with their advisor/committee chair before applying for graduation to meet any departmental deadlines. Applications for graduation filed after the published deadline will be processed for graduation the following semester.

The student does not need to have all requirements met before they apply for graduation. The application is an indication that they are planning to finish all degree requirements during the intended graduation semester. Students who apply for graduation and who do

not complete degree requirements by the end of the semester must reapply for graduation and pay the fee again.

• **Diplomas and Commencement**

UAF issues diplomas to graduates three times each year: in September, January and June. All students who complete degree requirements during the academic year are invited to participate in the annual commencement ceremony at the end of the spring semester. Names of students receiving degrees appear in the commencement program and are released to the media unless the student has a confidential hold on file with the Office of the Registrar. Students who do not want their names to be released may so indicate on the application for graduation form. Graduates are responsible for ordering caps and gowns through the UAF bookstore in early spring.

General University Requirements for Master's Degrees

CATALOG AND TIME LIMIT

Graduate students may elect to graduate under the degree requirements in effect and published in the UAF catalog in any one of the previous seven years in which they are enrolled as a master's degree student, or in the previous 10 years if they are a doctoral student. To be considered enrolled in their master's or doctoral degree program, they must meet the registration requirements per academic year. If a student is enrolled through the nondegree student registration process, they are not considered enrolled as a degree student during that time.

All nonacademic policies and regulations listed in the current catalog apply, regardless of the catalog used for degree requirements. Students must satisfactorily complete all coursework listed on their Advancement to Candidacy form and all other degree requirements within seven years for a master's degree.

GRADES AND GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Graduate students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the courses identified on their Advancement to Candidacy form to both remain in good standing and graduate. In addition, for the purpose of satisfying degree requirements, students must earn a B (3.0) or better (no P grades) in each F400-level course and a C grade (2.0) or better in each F600-level course. A B- is less than a 3.0 and, if obtained in an F400-level course, will not count for meeting degree requirements; likewise, a C- is less than a 2.0 and, if obtained in an F600-level course, will not count for meeting degree requirements.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

Graduate students must be registered for at least 6 credits per year (fall, spring, summer), at the graduate or F400 level in courses relevant to the graduate degree, while actively working toward a degree. Those who wish to temporarily suspend their studies should formally request a leave of absence.

Additionally, graduate students must be registered in both the semester that they defend their thesis dissertation and the semester in which they receive their degree as per the requirements under Graduation (p. 2).

TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

If a student needs to temporarily suspend studies while earning a graduate degree, they must obtain an approved leave of absence. If the student fails to register for at least 6 graduate or F400-level credits in a school year (fall, spring, or summer semester) or to obtain a leave of absence, they will be dropped from graduate study and will have to

be reinstated before resuming graduate studies. Contact the Graduate School for information at 907-474-7464.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Up to one-half of all graduate degree credits approved for a graduate program may be transferred from UAA and UAS. No more than one-third of approved program credits may be transferred from other accredited institutions outside the UA system. Transferred credits may not be used from previously earned undergraduate degrees. A minimum B grade (3.0) is required in all graduate courses presented for transfer. A P grade (pass) is not acceptable for transfer credit.

Transfer credits from international institutions require that transcripts be evaluated with a comprehensive course-by-course credential report through a NACES-approved evaluation service such as World Education Services (WES) (<http://www.wes.org/>). Transcripts from Canadian institutions (excluding Quebec) are exempt from this requirement; they may be sent directly from the issuing institution.

CREDITS EARNED WHILE NONDEGREE SEEKING

A student who earned postbaccalaureate degree credits while studying as a nondegree student at UAF may, with the approval of the graduate advisory committee, apply those credits toward a graduate degree. However, no more than one-half of all credits used to meet the requirements of a graduate degree may be credits earned as a nondegree student.

COURSE RESTRICTIONS

Credit by examination, audited courses, F100-, F200-, F300- and F500-level courses, and courses that are taken under the credit/no credit option cannot be used to fulfill the basic course requirements of any degree program. No more than 12 credits of special topics courses (F693 or F695) or individual study (F697) may be used toward a graduate degree. The director of the Graduate School must approve requests for exceptions to the limit.

DEFICIENCIES

The graduate advisory committee may require that students remedy any deficiencies. The committee will determine early in the program both how to remedy the deficiencies and the minimum level of performance required of the student. Graded undergraduate courses taken to remedy a deficiency must receive a grade of B (3.0) or better. Deficiency courses cannot be listed on the Advancement to Candidacy form.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Graduate students must be proficient in written and oral English. The graduate advisory committee will determine the requirements to address any deficiencies in communication. These requirements may not be used to fulfill departmental language/research tool requirements.

Master's Degree Requirements and Types

GENERAL MASTER'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

UAF offers research-oriented (thesis or project) and practice-oriented (non-thesis) master's degrees. Research-oriented programs are designed to direct graduate students toward scholarly activity that leads to the acquisition of new knowledge. Practice-oriented programs prepare graduate students for professional practice and direct them toward the application or transmission of existing knowledge. All degree requirements must be completed within a seven-year period. UAF tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, and research faculty are not eligible to

become candidates for a graduate degree within the discipline in which they teach.

The minimum requirements for a master's degree at UAF are as follows (individual departments may have additional requirements):

Steps Required for All Master's Degrees (Excludes MBA and M.S.D.M. Degrees)

- Formulate a unified degree program in cooperation with the student's graduate advisory committee. Degree programs must be composed of courses in the discipline or clearly related to and/or supportive of that discipline. All courses to be applied toward the degree must be approved by the advisory committee and follow the requirements set forth by the department that sponsors the degree.
- Master's degree students must:
 - a. Meet all requirements set forth in the General University Requirements (p. 3) section.
 - b. Submit an Appointment of Committee form by the end of the second semester of study.
 - c. Submit a Graduate Study Plan by the end of the second semester of study.
 - d. Submit a Report of Advisory Committee form by May 15 or October 15 (for students starting in the Fall or Spring semester respectively) of every year.
 - e. Pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination which may be combined with a project or thesis defense. Some programs (e.g., the M.Ed. degree program) may substitute a synthesizing paper for the comprehensive examination. This includes a demonstration of the ability to synthesize information in the field at a level appropriate for a master's degree.
 - f. Submit an Advancement to Candidacy form to the Graduate School. Once submitted, this form supplants the GSP and formally establishes specific degree requirements.
 - g. Pass an oral defense of the thesis or project if a thesis or project is required.
 - h. Register as necessary and apply to graduate per the requirements noted in the Graduation (p. 2) section.
 - i. Complete all degree requirements within the seven-year time limit.
 - j. Archive thesis or project in the UAF Rasmuson Library if a thesis or project is required.

Steps Required for MBA and M.S.D.M. Degrees

- Formulate a unified degree program in cooperation with the student's graduate advisor. Degree programs must be composed of courses in the discipline or clearly related to and/or supportive of that discipline. All courses to be applied toward the degree must be approved by the advisor and follow the requirements set forth by the department that sponsors the degree.
- MBA and M.S.D.M. degree students must:
 - a. Meet all requirements set forth in the General University Requirements section.
 - b. Submit a Report of Advisory Committee form by May 15 or October 15 of every year (for students starting in the Fall or Spring semester respectively) every year.
 - c. Submit an Advancement to Candidacy form (or equivalent as pertains to MBA and M.S.D.M. programs) to the Graduate School. Once submitted, this form formally establishes the specific degree requirements.

- d. Register as necessary and apply to graduate per the requirements noted in the Graduation section.
- e. Complete all degree requirements within the seven-year time limit.

Credit Requirements

- Successfully complete a minimum of 30 semester credits, of which 21 semester credits must be at the graduate level, including thesis and research. The remaining credits may be applied from courses at the F400-level.
- No F100-, F200-, F300-, or F500-level credits or audited courses may be applied toward master's degree requirements.
- For programs requiring a thesis, a maximum of 12 credits of thesis (699)/research (698) (with a minimum of 6 credits of thesis) may be applied toward degree requirements. For programs requiring a project, a maximum of 6 research (698) credits may be applied toward degree requirements. A student may enroll in as many thesis and/or research credits as needed to remain in good standing.

Second Master's Degree Programs

At the discretion of the student's advisory committee, admitting department, and dean, the student may transfer up to 20% of the minimum number of credits required for a UAF master's degree from a previously earned master's degree. Transferred credit may not be research, project or thesis credit. The transferred credit must be for completed graduate-level courses and not for portions of a course. For a 30-credit master's degree, for example, up to 6 graduate credits may be transferred; for a 45-credit master's degree, up to 9 graduate credits may be transferred. The following requirements apply to students who wish to pursue a second master's degree:

1. Submit a new application, including the application processing fee, updated transcripts, and three new reference letters.
2. Acceptable GRE scores submitted previously may be applied to a second master's degree.
3. Fulfill all general university requirements for the second master's degree, including taking a comprehensive exam (if required), completing a minimum of 30 semester credits (including thesis, research and transfer credits), and passing defense of thesis or project.
4. All work used to fulfill degree requirements for a second master's degree must be completed within seven years.

Exceptions to Degree Requirements

Deviations from academic requirements and regulations for graduate students must be approved by academic petition using the form available on the Graduate School website. Petitions must be approved by the student's graduate advisory committee, the department chair of the student's program, the dean of the school or college, and the director of the Graduate School.

Types of Master's Degrees

Additional information is available at uaf-grad-school@alaska.edu or 907-474-7464.

MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) – COURSEWORK FOCUS REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete at least 30 credits of coursework. At least 24 credits must be at the F600 level.
2. Pass a written or oral comprehensive examination, which may be integrated with the capstone course.
3. Successful completion of a capstone course that includes a demonstration of the ability to synthesize information in the field at a level appropriate for a master's degree.

MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) – WITH PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1. Successfully complete at least 30 credits of coursework, including at least 6 credits of project work (F698) unless the degree requirements of a particular program specify that a 3-credit project is permitted. No more than 6 research (F698) credits may be counted toward the minimum degree credits. At least 21 credits, including those earned for thesis and research/project, must be at the F600 level.
2. Pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination (may be combined with the project defense).
3. Present and defend the project.
4. Submit a completed and signed project defense form to the Graduate School.
5. Archive the project in the UAF Rasmuson Library.

MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) – WITH THESIS REQUIREMENTS

1. Successfully complete at least 30 credits of coursework, including at least 6 credits of thesis (F699). No more than 12 thesis/research (F699/F698) credits may be counted toward the minimum degree credits. At least 21 credits, including those earned for thesis and research/project, must be at the F600 level.
2. Pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination (may be combined with the thesis defense).
3. Present and defend the thesis.
4. Submit a completed and signed thesis defense form to the Graduate School.
5. Archive the thesis in the UAF Rasmuson Library.

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete at least 30 credits of coursework. At least 24 credits must be at the F600 level (6 credits at the F400 level).
2. Successful completion of a capstone course that includes a demonstration of the ability to synthesize information in the field at a level appropriate for a master's degree.

MASTER OF EDUCATION (M.ED.) REQUIREMENTS

General descriptions are available in the departments offering an M.Ed. degree:

- Counseling (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/academic-departments/counseling/>)
- Elementary Education (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/academic-departments/elementary-education/>)
- Secondary Education (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/academic-departments/secondary-education/>)
- Special Education (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/academic-departments/special-education/>)

MASTER OF FINE ARTS (M.F.A) REQUIREMENTS

General descriptions are available in the departments offering an M.F.A. degree:

- Art (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/academic-departments/art/>)
- English (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/academic-departments/english/>) (creative writing)

MASTER OF HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP (M.H.M.L.) REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete at least 30 credits of coursework. At least 24 credits must be at the F600 level (6 credits at the F400 level).
2. Successful completion of a capstone course that includes a demonstration of the ability to synthesize information in the field at a level appropriate for a master's degree.

MASTER OF MARINE POLICY (M.M.P.) REQUIREMENTS

A general description is available in marine policy (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/masters/marine-policy/>).

MASTER OF MARINE STUDIES (M.M.S.) REQUIREMENTS

A general description is available in marine studies (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/masters/marine-studies/>).

MASTER OF MUSIC (M.MU.) REQUIREMENTS

1. Minimum credits required – 36 credits
2. Successfully complete the performance of a graduate music recital.
3. Successfully complete an oral defense of an approved research project paper.

MASTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT (M.N.R.E.) REQUIREMENTS

A general description is available in natural resources and environment (<https://catalog.uaf.edu/masters/natural-resources-environment-mnre/>).

MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) – COURSEWORK FOCUS REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete at least 30 credits of coursework. At least 24 credits must be at the F600 level.
2. Pass a written or oral comprehensive examination, which may be integrated with the capstone course.
3. Successful completion of a capstone course that includes a demonstration of the ability to synthesize information in the field at a level appropriate for a master's degree.

MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) – WITH PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1. Successfully complete at least 30 credits of coursework, including at least 6 credits of project work (F698) unless the degree requirements of a particular program specify that a 3-credit project is permitted. No more than 6 research (F698) credits may be counted toward the minimum degree credits. At least 21 credits, including those earned for thesis and research/project, must be at the F600 level.
2. Pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination (may be combined with the project defense).
3. Present and defend the project.
4. Submit a completed and signed project defense form to the Graduate School.
5. Archive the project in the UAF Rasmuson Library.

MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) – WITH THESIS REQUIREMENTS

1. Successfully complete at least 30 credits of coursework, including at least 6 credits of thesis (F699). No more than 12 thesis/research (F699/F698) credits may be counted toward the minimum degree credits. At least 21 credits, including those earned for thesis and research/project, must be at the F600 level.
2. Pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination (may be combined with the thesis defense).
3. Present and defend the thesis.
4. Submit a completed and signed thesis defense form to the Graduate School.
5. Archive the thesis in the UAF Rasmuson Library.

MASTER OF SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT (M.S.D.M.) REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete at least 30 credits of coursework. At least 24 credits must be at the F600 level (6 credits at the F400 level).
2. Successful completion of a capstone course that includes a demonstration of the ability to synthesize information in the field at a level appropriate for a master's degree.

ONE HEALTH MASTER (O.H.M.) REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete at least 30 credits of coursework. At least 24 credits must be at the F600 level or higher (6 credits at the F400 level).
2. Successful completion of a capstone course that includes a demonstration of the ability to synthesize information in the field at a level appropriate for a master's degree.

Master's Degree Programs