HOW TO EARN A GRADUATE 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. You’ll find instructions for applying for admission in the Applying for Admission: Graduate Degree Programs (http://catalog.uaf.edu/getting-started/admission-graduate/) section.

Academics, Policies and Regulations

Many academic policies and regulations apply to both graduate and undergraduate students. These guidelines are relevant to your academic experience at UAF and are important for you 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 (http://catalog.uaf.edu/academics-regulations/).

Master’s

How to Earn a Master's Degree

TYPES OF MASTER'S DEGREES (HTTP://CATALOG.UAF.EDU/GRADUATE/MASTERSDEGREES/)

GENERAL UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS (HTTP://CATALOG.UAF.EDU/GRADUATE/MASTERSDEGREES/#GENERALUNIVERSITYREQUIREMENTSTEXT)

GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A graduate advisory committee is normally appointed within the first semester of study to guide students in developing and completing their degree programs. Committee members for graduate degrees are approved by the appropriate dean, usually upon recommendation of the department head, and by the dean of the Graduate School. Advisory committees for interdisciplinary students are approved by the dean of the Graduate School. Each interdisciplinary student follows procedures through the department of his or her advisory committee chair. The committee chair’s department will be the “home” of the interdisciplinary student for academic purposes.

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 an Annual Report of Graduate Student 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 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 head of the graduate advisory committee and takes the lead in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Committee Composition

- The core advisory committee of master’s degree students must consist of three approved UAF faculty members. Participating faculty above this number are considered additional committee members. Committee membership must be approved by the home department, unit dean and the dean 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 either core or additional 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 co-chair.

GRADUATE STUDY PLAN

Graduate students must file a Graduate Study Plan 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 course work, examinations, readings, internships or other supervised experience) and a projected timetable.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Advancement to candidacy formally establishes your specific degree requirements and should be done as soon as possible after qualifying. You are required to submit your application for advancement to candidacy one semester before you are awarded your degree.

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 a 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 to candidacy.

You may apply for advancement to candidacy for a specific master’s degree if you are in good standing and you have:

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

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 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
A few 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. Ph.D. degree students normally take a written comprehensive examination within two academic years of entering the program, but no later than two academic years before the expected completion of the degree, whichever is earliest. The Ph.D. student’s advisory committee may choose to give an oral examination to supplement the written comprehensive examination. Each Ph.D. student must pass the comprehensive examination prior to advancement to candidacy.

• 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.

• Defense of Thesis or Dissertation 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 or dissertation for final submission until the student has successfully defended it. The Ph.D. dissertation defense is to be conducted on any UAF campus. All committee members must participate in the defense of thesis or dissertation.

• 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 requirement, but some departments or programs may make this requirement. An advisory committee may specify a language or research tool if its requirements exceed those of the program. The specific language or research tool is determined by the advisory committee, guided by 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, topics selected must support the student’s degree program.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER’S DEGREES**

Types of Master’s Degrees (http://catalog.uaf.edu/graduate/mastersdegrees/)

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 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)**

  1. Formulate a unified degree program in cooperation with your 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.

  2. Master’s degree students must:

    a. Meet all requirements set forth in the General University Requirements (http://catalog.uaf.edu/graduate/mastersdegrees/#generaluniversityrequirementstext) section.

    b. Submit an Appointment of Committee form by the end of the first 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 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 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. 1) 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

1. Formulate a unified degree program in cooperation with your 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.

2. 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 of 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

1. Successfully complete a minimum of 30 semester credits, of which 21 semester credits must be at the graduate level, including thesis and research. Remaining credits may be applied from courses at the F400-level.

2. No F100-, F200-, F300-, or F500-level credits or audited courses may be applied toward master's degree requirements.

3. 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 your advisory committee, admitting department and dean, you 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 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 a 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 dean of the Graduate School.

Ph.D.

How to Earn a Doctoral Degree

GENERAL UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS (HTTP://CATALOG.UAF.EDU/GRADUATE/GENERAL-UNIVERSITY-REQUIREMENTS-PHD/)

GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A graduate advisory committee is normally appointed within the first semester of study to guide students in developing and completing their degree programs. Committee members for graduate degrees are approved by the appropriate dean, usually upon recommendation of the department head, and by the dean of the Graduate School. Advisory committees for interdisciplinary students are approved by the dean of the Graduate School. Each interdisciplinary student follows procedures through the department of his or her advisory committee chair. The committee chair’s department will be the “home” of the interdisciplinary student for academic purposes.

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 an Annual Report of Graduate Student 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 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 head of the graduate advisory committee and takes the lead in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Committee Composition

• The core advisory committee of doctoral degree students must consist of four approved UAF faculty members (all must have a Ph.D. or equivalent). For interdisciplinary students, one advisory committee member must be from a Ph.D.-granting department or be approved as the graduate school representative by the graduate school dean, based on prior experience advising Ph.D. students. Participating faculty above this number are considered additional committee members. Committee membership must be approved by the home department, unit dean and the dean of the Graduate School.

• Retired or emeritus UAF faculty who have an association with the home department may serve on doctoral 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 either core or additional committee members on doctoral advisory committees (all must have a Ph.D. or equivalent) upon expressed approval by the home department. They
may not serve as the chair of an advisory committee but may serve as co-chair.

GRADUATE STUDY PLAN
Graduate students must file a Graduate Study Plan 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 course work, examinations, readings, internships or other supervised experience) and a projected timetable.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY
Advancement to candidacy formally establishes your specific degree requirements and should be done as soon as possible after qualifying. You are required to submit your application for advancement to candidacy one semester before you are awarded your degree.

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 a 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 to candidacy.

You may apply for advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree if you are in good standing and you have:

- Completed the full-time equivalent of two academic years of graduate study.
- Completed at least 9 UAF credits.
- Received approval of the Graduate Study Plan.
- Obtained approval of the advisory committee for the title and synopsis of the thesis.
- Passed a written comprehensive examination.

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 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
  A few 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. Ph.D. degree students normally take a written comprehensive examination within two academic years of entering the program, but no later than two academic years before the expected completion of the degree (whichever is earliest). The Ph.D. student’s advisory committee may choose to give an oral examination to supplement the written comprehensive examination. Each Ph.D. student must pass the comprehensive examination prior to advancement to candidacy.

  • 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 at the project defense.

  • Defense of Thesis or Dissertation 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 or dissertation for final submission until the student has successfully defended it. The Ph.D. dissertation defense is to be conducted on any UAF campus. All committee members must participate in the defense of thesis or dissertation.

  • 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.

  • Outside Examiner
    An outside examiner representing and appointed by the dean of the Graduate School is required at all Ph.D. oral examinations (except the placement examination). The examiner must be from a different department than the student and the chair of the advisory committee. The outside examiner is present to determine that a stringent, unbiased examination is fairly administered and evaluated.

  • Language/Research Tool Requirement
    Proficiency in a second language or a research tool is not a university requirement, but some departments or programs may make this requirement. An advisory committee may specify a language or research tool if its requirements exceed those of the program. The specific language or research tool is determined by the advisory committee, guided by 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, topics selected must support the student’s degree program.
REQUIREMENTS FOR PH.D.S
The Doctor of Philosophy degree is granted in recognition of scholarly attainment and proven ability. 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 at UAF.

- Steps Required for all Doctoral Degrees
  
  1. The Ph.D. degree requires at least three full years of study beyond the baccalaureate degree. (See transfer credit (http://catalog.uaf.edu/getting-started/transferring-credits/).
  2. In addition to satisfactory completion of a plan of study developed in accordance with requirement listed above, the Ph.D. candidate must:
     a. Meet all requirements set forth in the General University Requirements (http://catalog.uaf.edu/graduate/general-university-requirements-phd/) section.
     b. Submit an Appointment of Committee form by the end of the first semester of study.
     c. Submit a Graduate Study Plan by the end of the second semester.
     d. Submit a Report of Advisory Committee form by May 15 of every year.
     e. Pass a written comprehensive exam.
     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. Satisfactorily complete a dissertation that is a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge in the area studied.
     h. Pass an oral defense of the dissertation (an outside examiner is required). The oral defense of the dissertation must be conducted on any UAF campus.
     i. Apply for graduation and be registered for a minimum of 3 graduate credits within your discipline and maintain enrollment in the semester that you successfully defend your thesis and you must be registered for a minimum of 1 graduate credit within your discipline and maintain enrollment during the semester that you graduate.
     j. Complete all degree requirements within the 10-year time limit.
     k. Archive dissertation in the UAF Rasmuson Library.

- Credit Requirements
  
  a. A minimum of 18 thesis (F699) UAF credits must be earned.
  b. No F100-, F200-, F300-, F500-level credits or audited courses may be applied toward the Ph.D.'s degree requirements.

- 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 dean of the Graduate School.

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Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistants receive stipends for either a semester or the academic year. Graduate assistants can be paid for a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session. Students with assistantships must be registered for at least 6 credits during both the fall and spring semesters. (Audited credits are not eligible.)

Any exceptions to the 20-hour per week rule must be approved by the student’s committee chair, department head, college dean. Complete a Student Overload Request form (https://www.uaf.edu/gradschool/forms/document_student_forms/Workload-Exception-Request.pdf) to request approval of more than 20 student work hours per week. Foreign nationals on temporary student visas are not permitted to work more than 20 hours.
a week while classes are in session and are not eligible for an overload waiver.

Teaching assistantships include a tuition payment by the university for no more than 10 credits each semester if the workload is 15 to 20 hours per week. If the workload is 10 to 14 hours per week, no more than 5 credits will be included. No tuition will be included if the workload is less than 10 hours per week.

Research assistantships include a tuition payment by grants/contracts for no more than 10 credits each semester if the workload is 15 to 20 hours per week. If the workload is 10 to 14 hours per week, no more than 5 credits will be included. No tuition will be included if the workload is less than 10 hours per week.

Tuition payments should be used for courses directly related to the student’s degree program. All fees are the responsibility of the student unless the department or institute makes other arrangements with the UAF Graduate School prior to registration.

A graduate student with a GPA of less than 3.0 for one semester will need to apply for an appeal with Financial Aid to continue with the assistantship. Please see the Financial Aid forms page (https://www.uaf.edu/finaid/forms/) for more information.