MASTER’S DEGREE

The requirements stated below are minimum requirements; additional conditions may be set by the individual programs.

Students planning to graduate should obtain current deadlines from our website (https://graduateschool.ucdenver.edu/). It is the graduate student’s responsibility to see that all requirements and deadlines are met (e.g., changing of I and IP grades, notification of final examinations, etc.).

Minimum Requirements

The minimum number of credit hours required for a Master's degree is thirty (30). While it is expected that most of this coursework will be at the Graduate level (5000 and above), some Graduate Programs may allow up to two undergraduate courses (4000 level and above) that are outside the specific discipline of their program to count towards the graduate degree and must be approved by the Program Director. Regardless, at least 24 credit hours of those required for completion of the Master’s program must be at the graduate level (5000 and above) and undergraduate credits (4000 level and above) cannot exceed 20% of total credit hours required. Of those, at least one has to be from outside the program’s discipline (different program four letter prefix) to count towards the graduate degree.

If the program has a thesis, research paper or internship option as the culminating requirement, the thesis/research paper must count for three to six (3-6) credits, unless specified otherwise by individual programs. Independent study coursework must not exceed 20 percent (6 credits) of the 30 credits of coursework required for the Master’s degree.

Master’s Thesis Credit

Master’s students who are enrolled in a program or track that requires a thesis, must register for a minimum of three and a maximum of six hours of thesis work. Once all required semester hours of thesis work have been taken, and all other course work is completed, students may register for CAND 5940 Candidate for Degree for the semester in which they will defend their thesis, if needed. The CAND 5940 Candidate for Degree course carries no credit or grade, but students pay for one credit of resident tuition and minimal fees. Students may only enroll in this course once during their final semester. For financial aid and enrollment verification purposes, students registered for the Candidate for Degree course will be considered full-time. The CAND 5940 is provided as a placeholder for students who have already earned all required credits for graduation, but need to be enrolled in the semester in which they would like to defend or take their final exams.

Thesis Requirements

Students who are enrolled in a program that requires a thesis must undertake their thesis work under the supervision of a thesis advisor and a faculty advisory committee. All research conducted for a Master’s degree must meet all appropriate regulatory standards specified by federal, state and local agencies regarding ethical research, animal use, human subjects, HIPAA and environmental safety. Each thesis is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master’s degree and must meet the formatting criteria outlined in the Style and Policy Manual for Theses and Dissertations, available on the Graduate School webpage. Prior to electronic submission to a national repository, the Graduate School performs a format review. Before this submission, theses must have been successfully defended before the student’s committee.

A grade of “In Progress” (IP) will be assigned for thesis hours in all semesters until the final approved thesis is submitted to the Graduate School. The thesis advisor determines the final thesis grade and then submits “Change of Record” requests to the Graduate School office to change all IP grades to the one final grade.

Admission to Candidacy

Students who wish to earn a Master’s degree must first become candidates. After completing or registering for all program-required course work, students must apply for graduation in their student portal and submit the signed Application for Admission to Candidacy to the Graduate School by the graduation deadline posted for the semester in which they plan to graduate. The candidacy form is available online on the Graduate School website.

An approved form certifies that a student's work is satisfactory and that the courses that are listed on the candidacy form are compliant with the program curriculum and the Graduate School Policies and procedures. Students must hold a minimum GPA of 3.00 to apply for candidacy.

Master’s Degree Final Examination / Thesis Defense

All candidates for the Master's degree are required to take a final comprehensive examination, present a cumulative professional portfolio or successfully defend a project or thesis. The final examination or defense is conducted by a committee consisting of at least three members of the graduate faculty. The student's final examination/defense committee and the examination schedule must be approved by the Program Director. The “Request for Graduate Examination” form must be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the final exam/defense.

The examination or defense may be oral, written, or both, or may consist of an evaluation of the cumulative professional portfolio. The chairperson and student must be present for the oral examination or defense, but a minority of members of the committee may participate by interactive video. If one faculty member cannot be present due to an emergency, the exam can proceed with the faculty who can attend, and the student will schedule a separate meeting with the absent faculty member at an alternate time. A majority of the examination committee members must vote for one of the following examination outcomes: Pass, Conditional Pass or Fail. The original signed form is sent to the Graduate School.

For a Conditional Pass, the examining committee will clearly define the requirements for the student to receive an unconditional passing grade; these requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of the examination committee within four months. Failure to satisfy these conditions will result in failure of the examination. A student who fails the examination is subject to immediate dismissal from the program on the recommendation of the graduate program and concurrence of the Dean.

A student who fails the examination is subject to immediate dismissal from the Program on the recommendation of the Graduate Program Director and concurrence of the Dean. At the program’s discretion, a student who fails the examination may be allowed to retake the exam once. The retake must be completed by the end of the next academic semester. Both the original signed examination form noting the failure as
well as the signed new exam form for the retake must be filed with the Graduate School.

**Time Limit**

Master’s students, whether enrolled full time (5 credits or above) or part time (less than five credits), have 7 years from the start of course work to complete all degree requirements, including the filing of the thesis with the Graduate School, if the program requires a thesis. Students who fail to complete the degree in this seven-year period are subject to termination from the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the program director and concurrence of the Graduate School dean. For a student to continue beyond the time limit, the Program Director must petition the dean for an extension and include

1. Reasons why the program faculty believe the student should be allowed to continue in the program, and
2. An anticipated timeline for completion of the degree.