

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE DEGREES

Graduate Education Policies and Procedures

The Graduate Education posts the Graduate Education Policies and Procedures (<https://www.ucdenver.edu/graduate-programs/forms-resources/>) that provide information and guidelines for graduate students and faculty at the University of Colorado Denver. Students are encouraged to be familiarize themselves with the policies outlined in this handbook and to use this handbook as a supplement to the personal feedback and guidance of faculty and staff in their departments.

Each graduate program is expected to provide students with a program-specific handbook indicating in some detail the curricular requirements, the expectations for satisfactory progress toward the degree completion, a timeline for the steps needed to meet these expectations and other features unique to each program (such as the composition and formation of thesis, project and dissertation committees to guide and review the student's progress).

GPA Requirements and Quality of Graduate Work

To maintain satisfactory academic progress, advance to candidacy, and earn a certificate or graduate degree, students are required to maintain a minimum program GPA of 3.00 for all graduate courses taken while enrolled in their graduate programs, including any undergraduate (i.e., 4000 level) courses that may be required for the certificate program or graduate degree. Failure to maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPA will result in the student being placed on academic probation. Courses in which grades below "B-" (2.7) are received may not be applied toward fulfillment of the requirements for any graduate (doctoral or Master's) degree or certificate. Courses required by the degree-granting program or certificate and in which the student receives a grade below "B-" must be retaken in order to achieve a "B-" or better grade.

Only earned grades of a "B-" or higher will be calculated into the program GPA. However, all grades received, including repeat courses, will appear on the student's transcript and will be included in the cumulative GPA calculation. Only one course enrollment may be counted towards graduation credits. If a student starts a new degree program after previously having been enrolled in a different program, their program GPA with respect to Graduate Education requirements will start anew, and only grades earned while enrolled in the new graduate degree program will be considered in terms of their academic standing.

Transfer Credits

A transfer credit is any credit that a student earned at another accredited institution *outside* of the CU System. Transfer credit requests may be accepted provided they are recommended by the corresponding program and approved by the school or college dean. The maximum number of credits that may be transferred is 12 for a Master's degree (or 40% if the program requires more than 30 credits) and 30 semester hours for PhD degrees. Limits vary for professional doctorate programs, and individual PhD programs may also have more restrictions.

Courses taken as pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory may not be transferred. All credits requested for transfer must be graded on an A-F

letter grade system. In addition, a grade of B- or above must be earned for a course to be transferred (individual programs may require a higher standard). Courses that are more than seven (7) years old will need to be validated by the Program Director. Courses transferred from a quarter-system school will also be recalculated to their semester equivalent (a 3-quarter hour course at any institution will be equivalent to 2 semester hours).

Coursework that has been applied towards an undergraduate degree or another graduate degree on the same level (e.g., MA to MS) cannot be accepted for transfer credit. Specifically, Master's courses applied to one completed Master's degree program may not be applied to another Master's degree; however, graduate level coursework (5000 level or above) completed for a Master's degree may be applied toward a doctoral degree with program approval. Also, credits earned in a graduate certificate program, that have not also been applied to a graduate degree program, may be applied to a graduate degree program with program approval.

Graduate Student Teaching Appointments

Many departments employ graduate students as part-time instructors or teaching assistants. The instructorship is reserved for those advanced graduate students already possessing appropriate degrees who may be independently responsible for the conduct of a section or course. Contact the department for further information.

Research Assistantships

Research activities provide opportunities for graduate students to obtain part-time work as research assistants in many departments. Such assistantships are funded by external grants obtained by faculty members. Contact the department for further information.

Certificate Program

The minimum number of credit hours required for a Graduate Certificate is 12. While it is expected that most of the coursework will be at the graduate level (5000 or above), no more than three credits may be earned at the undergraduate level (4000 level only), and with the approval of the Certificate Program Director. All graduate level certificate courses (5000 or above) will be eligible for transfer into a subsequent Graduate Degree Program assuming a) they meet the minimum grade requirements of the Graduate Program (which may be more stringent than those of the Graduate Education Policies and Procedures), b) the courses are deemed appropriate for the specific program of study, and c) the courses are approved for transfer by the Graduate Program Director.

Admission to Candidacy

Students who have completed the coursework required for a Graduate Certificate must submit a Certificate of Completion form. This form is available on the Graduate Education website and must be signed by the Certificate Program Director. A form that has been approved certifies

1. That the courses listed on the Certificate Completion form are compliant with the Certificate Curriculum and the requirements of Graduate Education,
2. That the course grades meet the minimum requirement of the Certificate Program,
3. The total Graduate Certificate GPA is at least a 3.0.

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://www.ucdenver.edu/graduate-programs/forms-resources/>). 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 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 (six 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 Education webpage. Prior to electronic submission to a national repository, the Graduate Program 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 Program. The thesis advisor determines the final thesis grade and then submits "Change of Record" requests to the Registrar's 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 Program by the graduation deadline posted for the semester in which they plan to graduate. The candidacy form is available online on the Graduate Education 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 Education 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 Graduate Education at least two weeks prior to the final exam/defense.

The chairperson and student must be present for the oral examination or defense, which may be held in-person or 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 Graduate Education.

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 Graduate Education.

Time Limit

Master's students, whether enrolled full time (five credits or above) or part time (less than five credits), have seven years from the start of course work to complete all degree requirements, including the filing of the thesis with the Graduate Program, 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 Program upon the recommendation of the program director. 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.

Doctoral Degree

Students who aim to receive a doctoral degree must demonstrate that they are proficient in some broad subject of learning and that they can critically evaluate work in this field. Furthermore, they must have shown the ability to work independently in their chosen field and must have made an original contribution of significance to the advancement of knowledge. The technical requirements stated below are minimum requirements for all candidates for the degree; additional conditions set by the departments or schools will be found in the announcements. Any department may make additional regulations consistent with these general rules.

Minimum Requirements

The minimum number of credit hours required for a PhD degree is 30 credits of coursework, all of which must be at the graduate level (5000 and above) and 30 dissertation credits. Selected programs might have obtained permission for an exception from this rule from the Graduate Council. Graduate level coursework taken for a Master's degree may be applied toward a doctoral degree with Program approval.

All courses that count towards the minimum requirements for a doctoral degree must be at the graduate level; and must be graded on the A-F system (not pass/fail) and offered within a Degree Program at the 5000 level or above. With the approval of the Program Director, students enrolled in Graduate Programs at CU Denver can undertake graduate-level courses at other campuses within the University of Colorado system.

The minimum enrollment requirement at CU Denver for doctoral students is six semesters of full-time scholarly work beyond the attainment of a bachelor's degree.

PhD students must register for a minimum of five hours (and a maximum of 10 hours) of dissertation credit in each fall and spring semester following successful completion of the comprehensive examination.

Once a student has completed 30 dissertation credits, they need to enroll for only one credit in each fall and spring semester until a successful defense of their dissertation. If defending in the summer semester, they must also register for one dissertation credit.

A grade of "In Progress" (*IP*) will be assigned to all dissertation credits earned until the final approved dissertation is submitted to Graduate Education. The dissertation advisor determines the final dissertation grade, and then submits "Change of Record" requests to the Registrar's Office to change all *IP* grades to this final grade.

Registration Requirements

A student (who is not on a leave of absence) and fails to register continuously in a given academic year (fall and spring semesters) for dissertation credit hours after passing the comprehensive examination may, at the discretion of the program director, be required to retake and pass the examination in order to regain status as a student in "good standing."

Students who are unable to register for the minimum dissertation credits because of extenuating personal circumstances should apply for a Leave of Absence.

Leave of Absence

Students who need to leave a CU Denver Graduate Program for a period of time should determine, in consultation with their Program Director, whether a petition for a Leave of Absence is required for up to one (1) year. An approved Leave of Absence pauses the student's academic record and automatically extends the time limit for completing a degree by the equivalent amount of time that the student spends on leave. Requests for leaves of absence that exceed one (1) year may be approved on a case-by-case basis with provided justification. Students who are absent for longer than one (1) year will be considered to have withdrawn from the Program and will be required to reapply for admission and be considered with all other applicants.

Examinations

Each doctoral program will require at least comprehensive and final examinations. Notice of all examinations must be filed with Graduate Education at least two weeks prior to administration.

Preliminary Examination

Each Program is responsible for ensuring that students are qualified for doctoral studies by passing a comprehensive examination or a combined preliminary and comprehensive examination. If a program evaluates students' preparedness with a separate preliminary examination, it must be administered equitably to all students, with the limited exception of programs that require a student to have a master's degree before entering doctoral training; a master's degree may exempt the student from the preliminary examination but cannot exempt the student from the comprehensive examination.

Comprehensive Examination

After completing or registering for all program-required, non-dissertation coursework, and concurrent with applying for admission to candidacy, doctoral students must take a comprehensive examination in their respective discipline. This examination will test a student's mastery of a broad field of knowledge, not merely the formal coursework that has been completed.

The examination committee shall consist of a minimum of three graduate faculty members. A majority of the committee members, including the Chair, must be members of the degree-granting Program. The student's dissertation advisor, if already identified, may not chair the comprehensive examination committee. The student's comprehensive exam committee and the examination schedule must be approved by the Program Director before being submitted to Graduate Education on the Exam Request Form. Graduate Education must receive the Exam Request Form by published deadlines. Individual graduate programs may have additional requirements for registering/scheduling the exam.

At the Program's discretion, the oral portion of the comprehensive examination may be open to all members of the Program, after which the student shall meet with the examination committee in a closed session. This examination must be completed no later than the end of the third year for full-time students, unless indicated otherwise in program-specific guidelines and communicated to Graduate Education.

All members of the committee must be present for the examination, either in person or by interactive video. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by Graduate Education. The primary faculty advisor's participation is determined by the program, if that person is not already part of the committee. In the event of an emergency that prevents one (1) faculty committee member from attending the exam, the exam may proceed with the faculty members who are able to attend. The student must schedule a separate meeting with the absent faculty member at an alternate time. The examination form must be signed by the committee and returned to Graduate Education. If the original Chair must be absent, a replacement must be designated by the program. A majority of the examination committee must vote for one of the following outcomes: a) Pass; b) Conditional Pass; or c) Fail. All members of the committee must sign the exam report form to document their individual vote and the form, with original signatures, must be returned to Graduate Education in hard copy or high quality scan.

If a student receives a Conditional Pass, the examining committee must clearly define the requirements for the student to receive an unconditional passing grade, and these requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of the examination committee within four months. The committee Chair is responsible for monitoring the conditions and reporting their outcome to Graduate Education. Failure to satisfy these conditions will result in failure of the examination.

A student who fails the examination is subject to immediate dismissal from Graduate Education upon the recommendation of the program and concurrence of the Dean. At the program's discretion, a student who fails the examination may retake it once. The re-examination will be in the form designated by the committee and must be completed within twelve months. The original examination form noting the failure should be signed by the committee and returned to Graduate Education. The student will be required to meet registration requirements and be registered during the term in which the exam is repeated.

Final/Dissertation Examination

After the dissertation has been completed, a final examination on the dissertation and related topics is conducted in two parts: an oral presentation of the dissertation research that is open to the public and a closed examination conducted by the examining committee.

The final examination/defense committee is usually, but not necessarily, the same as the student's Dissertation Advisory Committee. The dissertation defense committee shall consist of a minimum of four Graduate Faculty members, except for professional doctorate programs, which require a minimum of three Graduate Faculty members. A majority of the committee members, including the Chair, must be graduate faculty members of the degree-granting program. With program approval, *the doctoral student's dissertation advisor may chair the examination committee.*

The student's final examination/defense committee and the examination schedule must be approved by the Program Director before being submitted to Graduate Education on the Exam Request Form. Graduate Education must receive the Exam Request form by published deadlines.

Graduate Programs may have additional requirements for registering/scheduling the exam. Graduate Education will send announcements of

the examination to appropriate faculty members, and the Exam Report/signature form will be sent to the committee chair and other Program staff for completion at the examination.

The student must submit finalized draft copies of the dissertation to the defense committee at least two weeks before the examination date. Programs/committees may require an earlier deadline. All members of the committee must be present for the examination, either in person or by interactive video. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by Graduate Education. The primary faculty advisor's participation is determined by the Program, if that person is not already part of the committee. In the event of an emergency that prevents one faculty committee member from attending the exam, the exam can proceed with the faculty members who can attend, and the student will schedule a separate meeting with the absent faculty member and the exam committee chair at an alternate time. If the original committee Chair must be absent, a replacement must be designated by the Program. A majority of the examination committee must vote for one of the following outcomes: a) Pass; b) Conditional Pass; or c) Fail. All members of the committee must sign the exam report form to document their individual vote and the form, with original signatures, must be returned to Graduate Education in hard copy or high quality scan.

If a student receives a Conditional Pass, the examining committee must clearly define the requirements for the student to receive an unconditional passing grade, and these requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of the examination committee within 60 days of the defense. Under extenuating circumstances, the graduate Program Directors may petition Graduate Education for additional time. If a student fails the examination, they may not continue in the program unless a time extension is approved.

Dissertation Requirements

A dissertation is based upon original research and is expected to demonstrate mature scholarship and critical judgment, as well as familiarity with the tools and methods of research. The work must be conducted and presented on a subject approved by the student's dissertation advisor and the Dissertation Advisory Committee. The research must meet any regulatory standards specified by federal, state, and local agencies regarding ethical research, animal use, human subjects, HIPAA and environmental safety.

The dissertation is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree and must meet the formatting criteria outlined in the Formatting Guide for Theses and Dissertations available on Graduate Education website. Substantive contributions to research and writing by other persons should be explicitly acknowledged, either in an Acknowledgements section or in the appropriate chapters. The Graduate Program conducts the final review of dissertations for proper formatting. The final, formally approved dissertation must be submitted to Graduate Education, with the completed Thesis Approval Form, within 60 days of the thesis defense unless an extension is approved by Graduate Education. The thesis must be approved by a majority of the defense committee members, plus the student's advisor, if that person is not part of the defense committee.

Time Limit

Doctoral students, whether enrolled full time or part time, must complete all degree requirements within eight years of matriculation. Students who fail to complete the degree in this eight-year period are subject to termination from the Graduate Program upon the recommendation of the

program director. For a student to continue beyond the time limit, the Program Director must petition for an extension and include:

1. Reasons why the program faculty believes the student should be allowed to continue in the program and,
2. An anticipated timeline for completion of the degree. Extensions for time to degree are normally issued for one year or less, but under rare circumstances, a second extension may be granted. The "Extension of Time Limit" form is posted on the Graduate Education website. Approved "Leaves of Absence" automatically extend the time limit for earning a degree by the equivalent amount of time that the student is on leave.

Policies and Additional Information

For general information regarding Graduate Education Policies, Procedures, Forms, and more, please visit the Graduate Programs website (<https://ucdenver.edu/graduate-programs/forms-resources/>).

For information for specific programs, please visit the specific school or college page:

- Business School (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/business-school/>)
- College of Architecture and Planning (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-architecture-planning/>)
- College of Arts & Media (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-arts-media/>)
- College of Engineering, Design and Computing (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-engineering-design-computing/>)
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/>)
- School of Education & Human Development (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-education-human-development/>)
- School of Public Affairs (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/graduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-public-affairs/>)