

Master's Degree: Completion

Responsible University Officer(s):

- Executive Vice President and Provost

Policy Owner(s):

- Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

Policy contact(s):

- Karen Starry

Date Revised:

Jun 22, 2017

Effective Date:

Jul 16, 2012

Policy Statement

This policy sets the standards for the master's final examination and the requirements for completion of the master's degree.

I. Final Examination Committee: Plan A and B Master's Degrees

- a. The master's final examination committee must consist of at least three members, including the advisor/s(s). All members assigned ~~appointed~~ to the committee must meet the minimum standards established by the program and college. All members of the committee and the student must participate in the final examination. Committee members and/or the student may participate remotely as long as all conditions for remote participation in examination are met.
 - i. At least two members (including the advisor) must be from the student's major field.
 - ii. At least one member must represent a field outside the student's major. If the student has a declared minor(s), the outside member(s) must be from the minor field(s).
 - iii. Members cannot satisfy the requirement with respect to more than one field.

- iv. Collegiate deans or their designated representatives at the collegiate level must verify eligibility and approve members of the final oral examination committee.
 - v. The approved committee membership must be centrally archived in the system of record
- b. Changes in committee membership may be made after filing the degree plan if approved by the ~~program D~~director of ~~G~~graduate ~~S~~studies (DGS) and the collegiate unit. Changes must also be archived centrally in the system of record.

II. Final Examination:

- a. For students submitting a Plan A thesis/[professional engineering design project](#), the final examination must contain an oral component.
- i. The final oral examination is a closed examination open only to the final oral examination committee and the student. Programs may also require a written final examination.
 - ii. Students must provide the reviewers with a copy of the Plan A thesis/ professional engineering design project at least 14 days before the scheduled date of the final examination.
 - iii. Every member of the final examination committee must certify on the master's thesis reviewer's report that the thesis/professional engineering design project is ready for defense before the final examination may take place.
- b. Committee members must notify the candidate in writing of all required revisions to the thesis/[professional engineering design project](#) ~~or final project~~ as well as specify a time limit for the submission of the revised master's thesis or project within 7 days of the final examination.
- i. If revisions are required as a condition of passing [the final examination](#), the advisor/~~s(s)~~ must certify that the revisions have been completed before the degree is awarded.
- c. For students submitting a Plan B project, the final examination may be oral, written, or both. The final oral examination is a closed examination open only to the final oral examination committee and the student.
- d. A majority vote of an examining committee is required to pass the master's final examination.
- e. If the student fails the final examination, the student may retake the examination only if all committee members, or all committee members save one, approve this option.

- f. The second attempt to pass the master's final examination must comprise use the same committee members as the first examination unless an extraordinary or emergency situation necessitates a substitution.
- g. If the committee does not approve a retake, or if the student fails the second attempt, the student will be terminated from the master's program.

III. Thesis Submission: Master's Thesis/Professional Engineering Design Project

All students who complete a Plan A ~~Thesis or Professional Engineering Design Project~~ thesis/professional engineering design project must file a digital copy of the thesis/project with the University in accordance with University standards. Students may choose whether ~~or not~~ to request a temporary embargo on publication of the thesis/project. an embargo of publication of the thesis or design project for a limited period of time.

IV. Plan C Master's Degrees

The Plan C master's degrees typically does not include a standard final examination ~~formats like those for Plan A and Plan B master's degrees.~~ ~~However, s~~Students pursuing the Plan C must satisfy all of the course and other requirements specified by the program to be awarded in order to complete the degree.

V. Minimum GPA required for degree clearance graduation

Students must have a 2.800 minimum GPA for courses applied toward degree requirements included on the degree plan at the time of degree clearance.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply to the M.B.A. [Twin Cities] degree.

Effective Date

This policy applies to all students admitted after January 1, 2013. Students who matriculated before January 1, 2013 may choose to continue under the policies in effect when they initially matriculated in their graduate program.


Reason for Policy

This policy establishes uniform standards for the master's final examination; defines timely submission of copies of the thesis for University archives, and supports Board of Regents Policy: *Openness in Research* which covers public dissemination of University-sponsored research.

Procedures

- *Canceling or Recessing the Doctoral Preliminary and/or Master's or Doctoral Final Oral Examination*

Forms/Instructions

- OTR 197 - *Thesis or Dissertation Hold Request* 
- [Reviewer's Report Workflow Guide](#)
- [Master's Graduation Packet Request](#)
- [Final Exam Workflow Guide](#)

Appendices

- *Mutual Roles and Responsibilities for Faculty and Graduate Students: Guidelines*
- *Required Conditions and Best Practices for Remote Participation in Graduate Examinations*
- *Typical Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies*
- *Degree Completion Steps*
- *Thesis Formatting and Submission Guidelines*

Frequently Asked Questions

- *FAQ: Master's Degree: Completion*

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Phone	Email
Primary Contact(s)	Karen Starry	612-625-2815	starry@umn.edu
University of Minnesota - Duluth	Erik Brown	218-726-8891	etbrown@umn.edu
University of Minnesota Rochester	Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain	507-258-8006	ratliffj@r.umn.edu

Definitions

There are no definitions associated with this policy.

Responsibilities

Graduate School

- ~~Provide guidelines for formatting and submitting the thesis, to include not only current instructions for electronic formatting and filing, but also guidelines governing the use of already published material in the thesis. Guidelines should take account of possible copyright issues.~~

- [Provide current guidelines for formatting and submitting the thesis/professional engineering design project, information regarding inclusion of published material in the thesis/project, and guidelines related to potential copyright issues.](#)
- [Ensure that the guidelines are available in accessible formats.](#)

Collegiate Units

- Approve and archive in the system of record committee membership (including any subsequent changes to an approved committee).
- Approve and record the specific procedures used by programs for administering and grading the master's final examination.
- [Maintain and publish any additional collegiate-level publishing standards or guidelines \(e.g., stylistic conventions based on discipline, language of the thesis\).](#)
- [Ensure that the guidelines are available in accessible formats.](#)

Departments/Programs

- [Provide program-specific information in the graduate student handbook.](#)
- [Ensure that the graduate student handbook is available in accessible formats.](#)
- Publish the specific procedures used for administering and grading the master's final examination, and identify whether candidates for each degree and track offered must take written examinations, oral examinations, or both.
- ~~[Provide program-specific information in the graduate handbook.](#)~~
- Maintain and publish any additional program-level publishing standards or guidelines (e.g., stylistic conventions based on discipline, language of the thesis) [in accessible formats.](#)
- [Review and approve any changes in committee membership \(including any subsequent changes to an approved committee\);](#) route program-approved requests to the collegiate unit for approval.

[Students](#)

- [Meet all standards for the master's final examination \(Plans A and B\)](#)
- [Meet formatting requirements for submission of the master's thesis/professional engineering design project \(Plan A\).](#)
- [Meet all requirements for completing the master's degree.](#)



Related Information

- Administrative Policy: [Appointments to Graduate Examination Committees](#)
- Administrative Policy: [Master's Degree: Performance Standards and Progress](#)

- Administrative Policy: [Admission for Master's and Doctoral Degrees](#)
- Administrative Policy: [Readmission or Changes to Master's or Doctoral Degree Objectives](#)

History

Amended:

June 2017 - Comprehensive Review, Minor Revision: 1) Rewrote the introduction to clarify the goal of the policy, 2) added statement to clarify that at least two members of the exam committee are intended to represent the student's major field, 3) added statement to clarify that ~~the the~~ committee membership must be approved at the collegiate level, 4) added clarification that the student must be notified in writing of required revisions to the thesis and the time line for completion of revisions, 5) added an FAQ to ~~clarify clarify~~ that a program may require a public presentation of the master's thesis work but that this presentation is not required by the U and is not considered part of the final oral examination, 6) clarified language to indicate that students have a choice whether or not to impose and embargo on publication of the thesis for a limited time period. Proposed changes in policy respond to need for greater clarity on policy intent on the part of affected constituencies and enhanced consistency in policy implementation across programs.

Effective:

July 2012 - New Policy, Comprehensive Review: 1. Establishes guidelines for remote participation in graduate milestone examination. 2. Establishes the University as the digital archive of record for deposit of dissertations. 3. Extends applicability of policy requirements to programs not formerly under the aegis of the Graduate School.