

# Degree and Certificate Requirements

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## Graduate School

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## Master's Programs: General Requirements

Since each department or division may have special requirements for any program it offers, you must be aware of those requirements as well as the requirements of the Graduate School. Specific program requirements are listed in the Fields of Study chapter.

A minimum of 30 semester hours is required for all master's degrees, but several programs require more. Many departments offer both thesis-type and non-thesis master's programs, with the student's objectives and abilities determining which type of program they may pursue. Both types allow between six to 12 hours of research or research-and-thesis credit. Some departments or divisions may require candidates to perform research, teaching, or equivalent services as a part of their degree requirement.

## Examinations

**Note:** To be eligible to take the final examination for a master's degree, a graduate student must have a 3.00 grade point average or better and may not have grades of incomplete.

A preliminary examination is optional, but a final degree examination is required in all graduate programs except for the Master of Accountancy and the Master of Business Administration. The final examination, written, oral, or both, must be given in the semester in which the candidate completes the work for the degree, but they must pass the examination no later than five years after completing their first course toward the degree.

The typical examination committee for either a thesis is comprised of at least three members of the graduate faculty; two represent the student's major department and the third member represents the minor department (if applicable), the major department, or the Graduate School. The director of the thesis for a thesis-type program must have Level A standing of the graduate faculty. The non-thesis committee only requires two committee members.

If the committee is larger than three, there can be no more than one dissenting vote to pass the examination.

If a student fails the examination on the first attempt, his, her, or their department may allow him, her, or them to take the examination a second time after a minimum of fourteen (14) calendar days from the first attempt. A student may only take the examination two (2) times; after that, he, she, or they is ineligible to receive the master's degree.

## Thesis

The department determines whether students will follow a thesis-type or non-thesis program. Thesis credit ranges between six to 12 hours for a 30-hour program. For each required hour over thirty (30), the department may increase the thesis credit by one.

Format and style used by leading professional journals or style sheets in each discipline or professional field and must meet the Graduate School and OhioLink format requirements.

All students submitting a thesis or dissertation must deposit it electronically at OhioLINK. Before beginning to write, you should email the Graduate School at [gradschool@miamioh.edu](mailto:gradschool@miamioh.edu) for a template and instructions for mechanics and procedures from the Graduate School. Your thesis must be electronically deposited at OhioLINK at least 14 working days before commencement, or as determined by the Graduate School. The only paper submitted to the Graduate School by the student will be the original signature/title page on plain white copy paper.

## Transfer Credit

Up to one-third of the semester hours required for the degree may be transferred toward the master's degree. Courses cannot be older than five years at the time the master's degree is awarded. Contact the Graduate School for details regarding transfer of graduate credit.

## Course Level Requirement

A master's degree student must present at least 6 semester hours earned at 600-level or above.

## Time Limit

Work for a master's degree must be completed within five calendar years (e.g., students beginning master's programs in 2022 must complete their programs by December 2027). Partial credit may be given for graduate courses completed at Miami University that are between five and 10 years old, but such credit must be gained by way of petition to the appropriate petitions committee.

## Second Master's Degree

With the approval of the department, a student who has been admitted to a second master's degree program may apply a maximum of 10 semester credits from a first master's degree earned at an accredited graduate school toward the second master's degree, provided the work is not more than five years old at the time the second master's degree is awarded.

If a thesis was presented for the first degree, it may not be used for the second degree. The same degree title may be earned in two different areas of study.

For two master's degrees earned at Miami University see the dual degree policy in the policy library.

## Combined Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program

Departments and programs that offer the master's degree have the option of offering a combined bachelor's and master's degree option. See the specific department/program of interest for program and admission details.

**Admission Requirements:** Students can be admitted on a provisional basis to the combined program anytime during their academic career at Miami, from the time they apply for undergraduate admission. Upon earning a minimum of 64 hours and having a GPA of 3.00 or greater, students may apply to a combined program by completing the Graduate School application and submitting materials as required by the program to which they are applying. Standard application

and admission procedures shall be used. Both full- and part-time students may participate in the combined program at a department's discretion. Regular time-limits for completing the master's degree apply to students in a combined program.

**Double Counting Graduate Hours:** Departments or programs with a combined degree may allow students to double-count up to twelve hours of graduate course work toward their undergraduate degree. With permission of the appropriate advisor(s) and dean(s) or their designee(s), these students may count the graduate courses toward their major, minor, electives, and university requirements. A minimum of 145 hours is required for the combined program; 115 semester hour minimum for a bachelor's degree and 30 graduate semester hours minimum for a master's degree.

**Student Classification and Graduation:** Students in a combined program will remain undergraduates until they apply for graduation or submit a request to the Graduate School to have their classification changed from undergraduate to graduate. Students must have completed a minimum of 124 or 128 hours (depending on catalog year; undergraduate and graduate) to be classified as a graduate student. Students may receive their bachelor's degree prior to completing their master's degree. Upon receiving the bachelor's degree, students will automatically be classified as graduate students. Students receiving the bachelor's degree prior to completing the master's degree can count up to nine hours of graduate course work toward their bachelor's degree. Those hours can also count toward the completion of their master's degree as indicated above.

Students may withdraw from the combined program by completing a withdrawal form available at the Graduate School's website. The student must note on the withdrawal form that he/she is withdrawing only from the combined program and wishes to retain their status in the undergraduate program. The student must also notify their department of their decision to withdraw from the combined program.

## Doctoral Programs: General Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is awarded in the departments of Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Educational Leadership, English, Geology & Environmental Earth Science, Gerontology, Microbiology, and Psychology. The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) is awarded in the Department of Educational Leadership. Students entering these doctoral programs must fulfill the following requirements, as well as those established by the department(s) involved.

Students with a 3.00 grade point average for their baccalaureate degree may be admitted directly to a doctoral program if recommended by the department.

The degree Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education will not be granted to a member of the Miami University faculty or staff who holds rank above instructor.

Effective July 1, 1970, a recipient of a Miami doctorate is ineligible for employment as a faculty member at Miami, unless that person has been employed elsewhere for at least three years and has gained significant achievement since receiving the Miami degree. Those who received a doctorate or were already enrolled in a doctoral program before this date are exempt from this regulation.

## Ph.D. Requirements

A doctoral program normally requires three to five years post-baccalaureate work and generally includes three stages.

**First** stage ends when you receive a master's degree or earn the equivalent credit (30 semester hours) with a minimum grade point average of 3.00.

**Second** stage includes fulfillment of departmental requirements and successful completion of your preliminary comprehensive examination.

**Third** stage comprises research and seminars, preparation of your dissertation, and your final examination.

## Program Requirements

Each program has unique characteristics and may have standards higher than the minimum established by the Graduate Council. It is your responsibility to be informed of the standards and requirements by consulting with the graduate advisor or department chair.

## Credit Hour Requirements

Admission to the third stage requires a minimum of 30 hours of post-master's credit. A minimum of 16 semester hours and a maximum of 60 hours may be given for the dissertation at the discretion of the department.

A minimum 3.00 grade point average is required for work on the doctorate.

A minimum of 60 semester hours beyond the master's degree (or its equivalent) is required. Forty-eight hours must be earned at Miami University.

## Time Limit

Students must complete coursework, pass the comprehensive examination, complete their dissertation and pass the final examination within ten (10) years of completing their first course in the doctoral program.

## Transfer Credit

Up to 12 hours of graduate credit may be transferred toward the doctoral degree. Courses may not be more than seven years old at the time the comprehensive examination is taken. Contact the Graduate School for details regarding transfer of graduate credit.

## Preliminary (Comprehensive) Examination

**Note:** To be eligible to take the preliminary (comprehensive) examination, a graduate student must have a 3.00 grade point average or better and may not have grades of incomplete.

To be admitted formally to candidacy for the doctorate degree, you must pass a preliminary examination that qualifies you for further work and research.

You must pass this examination within seven years after completing your first doctoral-level course. It is a two-part examination: written and oral. You must take the oral part within four weeks after taking the written part.

Your examination committee is made up of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty including your dissertation advisor. The advisor must be in the same department as the doctoral student. A

fourth graduate faculty member also votes and participates in the oral part of your comprehensive examination. At least one member of the committee must be from outside your major department. The committee must be approved by the Graduate School dean. Three of the four committee members must approve in order for you to pass the examination. If your committee is larger than five, there can be no more than one dissenting vote for in order for you to pass the examination.

If the student does not pass the comprehensive examination after the first attempt, the committee may grant the student permission to take a second examination, which will be given under the conditions stipulated by the committee. Students can take a second examination no earlier than 14 calendar days following the conclusion of the first exam.

## Dissertation

The Doctor of Philosophy is primarily a research degree. You must demonstrate your capacity for independent research by writing an original dissertation on a topic within your major field of study. The subject of your dissertation must be reported to the doctoral committee at the time of your preliminary examination.

A minimum of 16 hours is required for dissertation research, and a maximum of 60 hours may be applied toward the semester hour requirement for the degree.

Before beginning to write, you should obtain a template and instructions for mechanics and procedures from the Graduate School. Generally, format and style used by leading professional journals in your field serves as a guide. Check your writing format early with the Graduate School to avoid any delay. A final format check and approval by the Graduate School are required before your dissertation is accepted and electronically deposited.

All students submitting a dissertation must deposit it electronically. Your dissertation must be electronically deposited at OhioLINK at least 21 working days before commencement or as determined by the Graduate School. The only paper submitted to the Graduate School by the student will be the original Certificate page (with original committee signatures) which is the first page of the dissertation.

## Final Examination

**Note:** To be eligible to take the final examination for the doctoral degree, a graduate student must have a 3.00 grade point average or better and may not have grades of incomplete.

A final examination to evaluate your dissertation work and competence in your field is conducted by an examining committee consisting of at least four members of the Graduate Faculty (your dissertation director, two readers, and a member from outside your department). Three of the four members must approve your dissertation and final examination for you to be awarded the degree. If your committee is larger than four, there can be no more than one dissenting vote on your examination. All members have responsibility for the conduct of the examination and must also certify the fairness of the examination. All Graduate Faculty are eligible to participate in the examination.

The final examination must be passed and the dissertation must be uploaded to OhioLINK no later than ten calendar years after taking the first course toward the degree. The deadline to deposit the dissertation is at least 21 working days before the commencement

when your degree is awarded, or as determined by the Graduate School. Any exception may involve further examinations or course requirements.

**Note:** Students must submit their thesis or dissertation electronically. More information is available from the Graduate School, 513-529-3734, or online at [www.MiamiOH.edu/graduate-school/](http://www.MiamiOH.edu/graduate-school/).

## Interdisciplinary Doctoral Degree

The Graduate School can authorize a special committee to supervise an interdisciplinary doctoral program for students whose needs cannot be met within an established program. Special Committee Degrees are "interdisciplinary degrees" that have unique requirements for each student. Special Committee Degrees are "one of a kind" degrees built around the unique needs of individual students that cannot be satisfied by approved, existing programs and may permit degrees in new and emerging fields or combinations of disciplines. A higher degree of independence is required on the part of the student, since easily-provided guidance from departments is more difficult to obtain, and there is not the usual collegial group of students in closely-related research and course work. The Special Committee Doctoral Degree is reserved for those departments granted the authority to offer the doctoral degree by Miami University and the Ohio Board of Regents.

Prospective students who may have an interest in a Special Committee Doctoral Degree should apply to the department of the degree program that is most central to their major area of interest. The student must meet the admission requirements of the department to which the application is submitted.

Students may be admitted directly to a Special Committee Degree program or enter the interdisciplinary program later. At least 12 credit hours must be remaining in the students' program when their special committee degree proposal is submitted. The prospective student's application must be endorsed by the home department and three potential committee members drawn from Level A faculty from within the home department or from across the University. Special Committee members can be drawn from non-doctoral departments. The Special Committee must consist of not less than five members, with no more than half (higher whole number) being drawn from any one department.

The chairperson (or in the case of co-chairs, one of the co-chairs) must be a member of the department to which the student had originally been admitted. The admitting department should remain the keeper of the student's records, and should make all appropriate nominations for financial support.

The Special committee is responsible for helping the student develop a plan of study to be submitted to the home department for its approval. That plan of study may be at significant variance with normal departmental requirements so long as it is approved following the established procedures of the home department.

Students must be accepted into a doctoral-degree-granting department, establish at least one semester of full-time graduate work, and then submit a proposal for a special committee degree. The one-page proposal should include (in the following order):

1. Names of two faculty members, in addition to the students' major professor(s), who will supervise their course of study.

2. Explanation of why their needs cannot be met within existing programs and why the special committee degree program is needed.
3. Proposed course of study.
4. Their committee's recommendation for an examination procedure that assures adequate in-depth coverage.

Students should check with the Graduate School and the faculty with whom you are interested in working for guidance in requesting a special committee for your program of study. Special committee members can be from non-doctoral departments and must have Level A standing on the Graduate Faculty. Students' course of study may vary from normal departmental requirements, as long as it is approved within the established procedures of the department. After their three committee members and department endorse the proposal, it is submitted to the Graduate School.

The Special Committee is governed by the expectations and regulations of the Graduate School.

## **Ed.D. Requirements**

The Ed.D. is available in the Department of Educational Leadership.

Although the general requirements listed for the Doctor of Philosophy apply to the Doctor of Education, the latter is specifically designed for students professionally oriented to a career in the field of education. Advanced research courses, therefore, may vary from those pursued in other fields, and the program may be considered more appropriate to those especially interested in public education.

## **Certificate Programs: General Requirements**

The Graduate School offers certificate programs in several areas. These programs, described in the Fields of Study chapter, are available to students who have been admitted to the Graduate School and have met program prerequisites.

## **Specialist in Education: General Requirements**

The Specialist in Education (Ed.S.) degree is designed for those with bachelor's degrees who want to prepare for a career in school psychology and for those who are certified school psychologists who wish to upgrade their training. Information about the Ed.S. in School Psychology is found in the Education Psychology field of study section.