

Master's degree requirements

Application for admission

Applications must be submitted online at www.applytexas.org. Application is made through the Toulouse Graduate School. Most master's degree programs require supplemental application materials. Contact the academic unit for additional information on supplemental materials and deadlines.

General requirements

The candidate must earn 30 or more hours of graduate credit, depending upon the requirements for the degree sought. Specific graduate degree requirements are stated in the approved degree plan and can be based on either the *Graduate Catalog* currently in force at the time the student first matriculates or subsequent Graduate Catalog under which the student enrolled.

Consult subsequent sections of this publication for the specific course requirements for each master's degree.

Level of work required

All of the course work to be credited toward the master's degree plan must be numbered 5000 or higher. Deficiencies or background courses are completed in addition to course work to be credited toward the master's degree plan regardless of course number.

Time limitations

All course work and other requirements to be credited toward the master's degree must be completed within the following time periods, depending upon the number of semester hours required for the degree.

Semester hours required	Completion
42 or fewer	5 years
43 to 49	6 years
50 or more	7 years

Time limits are strictly enforced unless a request for an extension of time to include those courses is submitted with all necessary department and college support. Students exceeding the time limit may be required to repeat the comprehensive exam, replace out-of-date credits with up-to-date work, and/or show other evidence of being up-to-date in their major and minor fields. Students anticipating they will exceed the time limit should apply for an extension two semesters **before** the normal time period to complete the degree expires. Holding a full-time job is not considered in itself sufficient grounds for granting an extension. For time extension procedure/forms visit tgs.unt.edu/extension.htm.

Time spent in active service in the U.S. armed forces will not be used in computing the time limit. However, career members of the armed forces should consult the graduate school concerning the credit given to work completed before or during active military service.

Leave of absence

Leave of absence applies to students admitted to the master's degree who wish to discontinue work toward the degree for a specified period of time due to exigent circumstances. If approved, the leave of absence may "stop the clock" on the time limit for the degree of master's for a maximum of three terms (excluding summer). In the case of extenuating circumstances, a second leave of absence may be requested and may be approved by the Associate Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School on the recommendation from the student's committee, graduate coordinator, department chair, and the college academic associate dean. If the student has begun their thesis and is under the continuous enrollment requirement, a waiver of continuous enrollment must also be requested and approved by the Graduate School. Degree requirements and graduation must be completed within the appropriate time limit for completion of the degree.

Use of transfer credit and extension credit

Subject to the approval of the department, program, school or college, a student who holds a bachelor's degree and who has been admitted to the Toulouse Graduate School at UNT may apply to a master's degree. This section applies only to graduate credit not used for a degree. Subsequent sections note use of credit for concurrent and conferred degrees.

Credits earned for graduate study at other universities (both domestic and international) may be applied toward an advanced degree. Typically, semester credit hours associated with graduate courses for which grades of B or better were earned are eligible for transfer. Any additional conditions under which credit transfers may be made are determined by the departments/programs. For courses to count toward a master's program at UNT, they must have been taken from an accredited degree-granting institution.

Students who complete graduate work at another institution to be applied towards a UNT graduate degree must furnish a complete official transcript of transfer work to the Graduate School. No commitment can be made by UNT concerning the applicability of such work until official records have been received and evaluated.

Due to the time required for receipt and evaluation of transcripts, students who are completing their last course(s) elsewhere will not graduate during the same semester, but will be processed for the next graduation term.

In accordance with the rules of the SACSCOC, at least one-third of the semester credit hours required for any graduate degree must be completed in course work at UNT. The graduate program committee is responsible for compliance with program accreditation requirements. For any transfer credit to count toward a master's degree, the courses transferred must have been taken within the time limit established by the Toulouse Graduate School.

The number of hours accepted by transfer from an institution within the UNT System or an accredited university is determined by a student's department and/or program.

Requirements for concurrent degrees

The maximum number of semester credit hours that are usable from a concurrent master's degree is 6 hours. A graduate student may be allowed to complete a concurrent doctoral degree with a minimum of 42 additional semester credit hours. Provision of a minimum number of credits to be earned in no way restricts the major department from requiring additional deficiency work and/or additional work on the doctoral program itself.

Use of semester credit hours from conferred degrees

Students in any graduate program may request to use a limited number of credits from a conferred degree toward the requirements of a second degree. Credits may never be used for three or more degrees; if a student seeks a third-degree, it must stand alone. A degree may overlap with only one other degree for the purpose of using credits from a previously conferred degree. This only applies to graduate-level credits earned for a graduate-level degree.

Students pursuing a second degree have the option to use credits where the courses meet specific requirements in a degree. In all cases the program faculty must review the courses and make a decision about the appropriateness to their program. In general, the maximum number of hours that are usable from a previously conferred master's degree is determined as follows:

- up to 6 semester hours in a 30- to 35-hour program,
- up to 9 semester hours in a 36- to 59-hour program,
- up to 12 semester hours in a program of 60 hours or more.

For any transfer credit to count toward a degree, the courses transferred must have been taken within the time limit established by the Toulouse Graduate School. The number of credits from a conferred degree counted will have to be determined on a program-by-program basis dependent upon the number of credits in the program. Departments and programs may limit the counting of previously conferred semester credit hours below the maximum but may not allow counting above the limit. Some programs may not allow counting of previously conferred degree credit hours.

For a student who wants to use conferred doctoral credits toward a master's degree in another program, the department/program granting the master's will decide how many credits, up to a maximum of 6, may apply toward the master's degree.

Graduate academic certificates transfer credit:

Subject to the approval of the department, program, school or college, a student who is enrolled in a graduate academic certificate and who has been admitted to the Toulouse Graduate School at UNT may apply to a graduate degree.

Credits from graduate certificates leading to a master's degree must have been taken within the time limit established by the Toulouse Graduate School.

At the discretion of the department/program stackable certificates may be applied towards a master's degree. Students are encouraged to apply for and be admitted to a master's program as early as possible.

Degree plan: admission to candidacy

The student who desires to become a candidate for the master's degree should, before or at the time of registration, confer with the major department concerning the selection of a major professor and, if a minor is desired, with the intended minor department concerning the selection of a minor professor. The major professor, minor professor and the chair of the major department or a representative designated by the chair will constitute the student's advisory committee. The major professor will act as chair of the committee.

The student's program is planned under the direction of the major and minor professors immediately after completion of the first term/semester of graduate study. The degree plan is submitted to the graduate school when all admission provisions are complete. When the degree plan is approved by the Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School the student will then be admitted to candidacy for the master's degree.

Certain degree programs require successful completion of a specific admission course for admission to candidacy. Consult the appropriate section of this catalog for the specific course requirement. Immediately after the student has completed the admission course, the proposed degree plan will be sent to the Toulouse Graduate School for final approval. When the degree plan is approved the student is admitted to candidacy for the master's degree.

All changes in the degree plan must be approved by the major professor and the department chair or departmental graduate advisor, and must be submitted in writing to the graduate school.

Courses listed on the degree plan must carry letter grades, with the exception of those courses in which the student is engaged in individual research and is not attending an organized class. These courses, with the approval of the department, may be assigned pass/no pass grades.

No student whose academic or personal record is unsatisfactory will be admitted to candidacy for the master's degree.

Applicants will be notified by the Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School of their admission to candidacy for a graduate degree.

Major and minor field

The candidate for the master's degree ordinarily is required to select a major and a minor field. To major in any field, the candidate must have completed a minimum of 24 semester hours of undergraduate courses in the field, including at least 12 hours of advanced courses prior to beginning graduate course work. Certain graduate majors require more extensive undergraduate preparation. Consult the section of this catalog describing the particular major desired for information concerning undergraduate preparation requirements.

A minor is defined as graduate work completed outside of the student's major. Minor areas of study can only be chosen from academic areas in which the University of North Texas is already authorized to offer a major or concentration, or where specific Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approval has been given to offer courses for the purposes of a minor.

When an official minor is required or opted, the candidate's graduate advisory committee must include a faculty member from that area who will verify accountability in the minor area through comprehensive examinations, thesis, problem in lieu of thesis, dissertation projects or other appropriate means.

For a master's degree, the student must complete at least 6 hours in a single area to have the area count as a minor. For master's students all hours counted toward a minor must carry graduate credit and must be numbered 5000 or above.

Twelve hours of undergraduate credit are the usual prerequisite for a minor in any field. (*Exception:* In the case of a minor in a foreign language, the student is required to have completed the second term/semester of the sophomore year of study in the intended minor language.) In departments that offer no freshman courses only 6 hours of undergraduate credit are required as prerequisite to a graduate minor in that field.

Minors are not required on certain graduate degrees. Consult subsequent sections of this publication for specific regulations governing the degree sought.

The master's degree thesis

In most departments the candidate for a master's degree is offered two means of meeting this requirement. In some departments, only Option I is available. Consult the department to determine if both options are available.

Option I: thesis

1. The master's degree candidate should select a major of at least 18 semester hours, exclusive of the thesis, and a minor of at least 6 hours if required by the major department.
2. Membership of thesis examination committees will include representatives of the major field and the minor field, if the student is pursuing a minor area. The number of members on such committees will normally be three to five; at least three are required. Two committee members must come from the student's department.

If a student is advised by a faculty member from outside of the department offering the degree, that faculty member can only be a co-chair after receiving permission from the department. The thesis examination committee will then require a co-chair who is a faculty member of the department offering the degree.

3. In cases in which the academic unit has specified particular departmental or college procedures for thesis committee members, the student will follow these procedures as long as these are consistent with this policy. In some cases in which an interdisciplinary studies program is not housed under a specific department, the interdisciplinary studies program will coordinate the selection of committee members with involved departments and the Toulouse Graduate School.

The thesis chair is the student's mentor and guide through this process of the demonstration of independent scholarship. Therefore, the chair of the thesis committee, who must be willing to serve, is selected by the student in consultation with the appropriate graduate faculty, graduate advisor or department chair in the student's discipline. The thesis chair must hold full membership in the graduate faculty. Students should consult the departmental policy for the selection of the remaining committee members.

A person who is not a regular member of the University of North Texas graduate faculty may receive a temporary graduate faculty appointment from the Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School in order to serve on a committee. For these appointments, the thesis committee chair should submit an associate membership nomination form, justification for the appointment, and a vita of the prospective committee member. Associate members may not chair the thesis committee. The majority of committee members must hold regular UNT faculty status.

4. A thesis or final document consisting of the written report of an investigation or of a successful project is required. This project must be initiated, executed and reported by the candidate under the supervision of the major and minor professors.

It is strongly recommended that students meet with the graduate reader prior to beginning the thesis concerning the proper form and preparation of the paper.

The student is required to enroll in a minimum of 3 semester hours of thesis credit in the major department under the course number 5950 and must maintain continuous enrollment in 5950 through the semester of graduation. Grades of PR will be recorded at the end of each term/semester satisfactory progress of enrollment until the thesis is filed with the graduate school, then appropriate grades and credit hours will be shown on the student's record. Only one enrollment in 5950 is required during the summer session/term (in any session/term) if the student is using university facilities and/or faculty time during that term/semester or to graduate in August.

The total number of semester hour credits recorded for the thesis may not exceed 6, regardless of the number of enrollments in the thesis seminar. No credit will be recorded until the thesis has been approved by the student's advisory committee, submitted to the Graduate Office and finally approved by the Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School. See the online academic calendar at tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/graduation-information for the deadline for submitting a thesis in any given term/semester. Detailed instructions for submission of the thesis are available from the Toulouse Graduate School.

5. The candidate must pass a final comprehensive examination principally over the contents of the thesis and related matters. The comprehensive examination may be oral and/or written, or include another form of assessment as determined by the department. The student should check the appropriate departmental section of this catalog for further information. The results of the comprehensive examination must be received by the Office of the Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School no later than the deadline date for submission of theses by students expecting to graduate at the end of the current term/semester or summer session/term. Students should file for graduation according to the graduate graduation deadlines and at least ten days prior to the date of the defense.

Format

For guidance on formatting requirements see <https://tgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual>

Openness of theses and dissertations

The University of North Texas, as a member of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), endorses the fundamental tenet on openness and access of thesis and dissertation research as stated in the CGS policy manual *The Doctor of Philosophy Degree: A Policy Statement* (CGS, 2005). In compliance with CGS, it is the policy at the University of North Texas that "an essential aspect of [thesis] and dissertation research and scholarship is the free and full dissemination of research results. Restrictions, either in the conduct of [thesis] and dissertation research or in the sharing of its results, are antithetical to that spirit." Therefore, research that is classified by a government agency or that is proprietary in nature and restricted, insofar as it must be held to secrecy and cannot be openly evaluated or published, is unsuitable for master's or doctoral research (CGS, 2005, pp. 29–30).

Faculty advisors of students conducting thesis and dissertation research shall advise their students and abide by the following:

1. If the faculty director of the thesis or dissertation is covered by a nondisclosure agreement (NDA), if either the faculty director and/or the student know in advance that the information or work planned for use in the thesis or dissertation is under an NDA or other restriction in which the work must be held to secrecy, or if at the time the

topic of the thesis or dissertation is set there is any other substantial possibility that the work will lead to a thesis or dissertation that is secret (either in whole or in part), the student will not include this information or work as part of the thesis or dissertation.

2. If in the process of the student's thesis or dissertation research the student is developing a patentable work, the Vice President for Research and Innovation must be notified as soon as possible and the utility patent filed so as to allow an open defense and publication of the thesis or dissertation.
3. In the circumstances in which the thesis or dissertation is close to completion or has been completed and a patentable work was unforeseen, the defense examination will be open only to the student's committee and departmental faculty and the thesis or dissertation held from publication until the utility patent has been filed or for no longer than 90 days after the defense examination, whichever is the shorter time period, unless the Vice President for Research and Innovation requests an additional limited period of time for the utility patent.
4. Students may place a 6-month, 1-year, 2-year, or 5-year embargo on their electronic thesis or dissertation (ETD). To allow students to receive informed guidance from their faculty advisors, embargo choice must be approved by the major professor at the time the ETD is filed with the Graduate School. An embargo prevents any and all users from viewing or downloading the ETD PDF, for the duration of the selected embargo period; however, the abstract and library catalog entry are available to all users throughout the entire embargo period. Embargo period begins on the 1st day of month following the graduation month and expires on the last day of the month at the end of the embargo period. Students have the option of adding a period of restricted access at the end of the embargo period, lasting 5 years. Faculty approval is not required for extension requests. During the restricted access period, the ETD is available to the UNT community only (i.e., users with a valid UNT login). Distribution via interlibrary loans is not permitted; however, the abstract and library catalog entry continues to be available to all users. Students will need to notify Toulouse Graduate School (email acceptable) within 30 days prior to the expiration of the embargo, if optional restriction is desired.

[Attributions: Portions of this policy were taken from *The Doctor of Philosophy Degree: A Policy Statement* (Council of Graduate Schools, 2005) and *Openness in Research*, (Stanford University Research Policy Handbook, Document 2.6, 2001).]

Option II: problem in lieu of thesis

In lieu of a thesis, the candidate must complete one or both of the problem courses numbered 5920 and 5930, as required by the major department.

The student is required to enroll for credit in the major department under the course number 5920 and 5930 (or 5930 only for cases in which the degree sought requires only one problem in lieu of thesis). If satisfactory progress is made, the grade of I is assigned at the end of the semester or term. If unsatisfactory progress has been made a failing grade is recorded. In the latter case, the student must enroll for 5920 or 5930 a second time. This procedure will be continued until the problem has been completed and approved. Continuous enrollment in Problem in Lieu of Thesis is not required.

As part of the requirements for each problem course the student must present in writing a formal report or essay based upon the work done in the course, which must be approved by the advisory committee.

The master's degree without thesis requirement

In programs leading to the master's degree that do not require the preparation of a thesis or problem in lieu of thesis, required or elective courses are substituted for the thesis requirement. The graduate curricula at UNT foster research and/or independent learning including research experiences, mentoring between graduate faculty and graduate students, and practical training that allows

for contributions to the field of study, the development of new knowledge and practical experience. These programs are identified and described in subsequent sections of this publication.

The candidate for the master's degree under the non-thesis option is required to pass a comprehensive final examination, scheduled in accordance with the rules governing the comprehensive examination. The structure and form of the comprehensive final examination is determined by the student's major department or school, and can take a variety of different forms, including, but not limited to, a capstone experience, written exam, oral exam, recital, portfolio, or exhibition. Information concerning this requirement is available from the student's major department or school.

Completion

When the thesis is completed and has received preliminary approval of the advisory committee, the student's major professor will schedule the final comprehensive examination and will notify the Toulouse Graduate School of the date and results of the examination. Students should apply for graduation in accordance with the graduation deadlines.

No thesis credit will be recorded until the thesis has been approved by the student's advisory committee, submitted and approved by the Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School.

Continuous enrollment

The University of North Texas requires that graduate students enrolled in programs with a thesis or dissertation requirement maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of three credit hours of thesis or dissertation during each long semester until the thesis or dissertation has been formally approved, with a possible one-time exception, as described below. The ability to provide access to faculty time, student services, research support, and financial aid eligibility is made possible by a graduate student's official registration and continuous enrollment. Master's students must maintain continuous enrollment subsequent to completing required coursework and passing any qualifying examination(s) for admission to candidacy.

A graduate student must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of three credit hours of thesis or dissertation during each long semester after successful completion of required coursework and/or qualifying exams until the Toulouse Graduate School has approved the thesis.

Thesis registration during at least one summer session is required if the student is using university facilities and/or faculty time during that summer session.

Students who successfully defend and submit their final thesis after the current semester deadline promulgated by the Toulouse Graduate School, but before the last day of the term (per the Academic Calendar), are eligible to graduate the following semester without enrolling in thesis/dissertation hours.

Once a graduate student begins enrollment in thesis or dissertation hours, the Toulouse Graduate School will send a written reminder of this policy to the student and the student's major professor each long semester until the Toulouse Graduate School has approved the thesis.

In the event of an unexpected delay or complication with the thesis or dissertation, a graduate student who has completed all other degree requirements, except for the thesis, may petition for a one-time exception to this policy.

If the student's petition is approved by the student's major professor, department, and the Toulouse Graduate School, the student may enroll for only one (1) credit hour of independent study in lieu of thesis, instead of the usual three (3), during that one (1) exceptional term.

The graduate student's major professor and department will act on such a petition within ten (10) working days and the Toulouse Graduate School will act on a petition approved at the department level within thirty (30) working days.

The Toulouse Graduate School is expected to approve such petitions with assurances from the major professor and the department that the student is expected to complete the degree program during the exceptional term.

Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may invalidate any previous thesis credits or may result in the student being dropped from the degree program, unless the student is granted an official leave of absence for medical or other exceptional reasons by the Toulouse Graduate School. See Policy 06.042.