Master's degrees

Second language requirement

The second language requirement for M.A. and M.A.T. students must be met before any final exam is taken or final graduation paperwork can be approved.

The Department of World Languages and Literatures has determined that the second language requirement for M.A. and M.A.T. students can be met in the following ways:

1. Equivalent coursework: Students who have passed a course equivalent to PSU level 203 or higher in a second language will be deemed to have met the language requirement. The Graduate School will certify completion upon evaluation of the student's academic record if the requirement was completed at PSU. If the requirement was completed at a different institution, the Department of World Languages and Literatures will issue a certificate of completion. M.A. and M.A.T. students are responsible for making their academic records available in the first term of admission and requesting evaluation and certification.
2. Students who do not meet the requirement under 1. above should make an appointment with the Department of World Languages and Literatures during the first term after their admission to make an individualized plan for the completion of their language requirement. Options include preparing for and passing one of these evaluations:
   a. Oral proficiency interview
   b. A written test such as
      i. The Graduate Student Foreign Language Test
      ii. The CLEP exam
      iii. A special exam, administered by the Department of World Languages and Literatures
   c. Coursework after admission: taking a course at level 203 or above in residence or abroad
   d. Special reading courses, if available.

The Department of World Languages and Literatures will teach and test only in languages in which it has expertise. However, off-campus arrangements may be possible with the cooperation of other institutions and the approval of the chair of the Department of World Languages and Literatures. Certification of having passed a second language examination from an institution other than PSU must be approved by the Department Chair of World Languages and Literatures.

A student whose native language is not English may meet the second language requirement in English, except for students in the M.A. in World Languages and Literatures, who are required to demonstrate fluency in two foreign languages other than English at the time of admission and are not required to demonstrate additional competency except as necessary to complete their degree requirements.

Coursework and program of study

In the first year a student should prepare a proposed program of study in consultation with the faculty adviser. The purpose of the planned program of study is to present an organized, individualized plan for coursework, practica, and research activities consistent with the requirements for the proposed degree and approved by the faculty adviser.

If PSU pre-admission credits or reserved credits are to be included on the program of study, the department must submit a DARS exception to the Graduate School. If transfer credits (courses taken at any time from another regionally accredited institution) are to be included on the program of study, the Proposed Transfer Credit form (GO-21M) must be submitted to the Graduate School for approval. See Pre-admission and transfer credit and Reservation of coursework for graduate credit for detailed information about pre-admission, transfer, and reserved credits.

A student must have a minimum 3.00 GPA on the courses applied to the program of study, as well as a minimum 3.00 GPA in all graduate-level courses taken at PSU, in order to graduate. Departments may establish a more rigorous standard. Although grades of C+, C, and C- are below the graduate standard, they may be counted as credit toward a master's degree with the specific written approval of the department if taken at PSU after the term of formal admission to the graduate program. Grades of D or F indicate clearly unacceptable work and cannot be applied to graduate degree requirements. Audited courses cannot be used to meet any requirement for master's degrees.

A grade of IP (In Progress) may be used for 501 Research and for 506 Project when a student is progressing in an acceptable manner toward completion of the work; final grades for 501 and 506 credits are submitted by the instructor via an online grade change. An IP grade must be used for 503 Thesis when a student is progressing in an acceptable manner; final grades for 503 credits are assigned by the instructor on the Recommendation for the Degree form (GO-17M) and posted to the student's transcript after approval of the thesis and certification for graduation by the Graduate School.

All coursework applied to the master's degree program must be completed within the seven years prior to the awarding of the degree (e.g., a course started in the fall term of 2013 will be beyond the seven-year limitation at the close of fall term 2020).

Degree application

Students must apply for graduation by the first Friday of the anticipated term of graduation; see the Graduate Candidate Deadlines for specific due dates. There is a required $30 fee per application as well as a $2 service charge.

As a one-time courtesy, students who do not complete degree requirements can have their application for graduation carried forward to a future term (typically the next term, but it could be at maximum up to one year in advance). To request that an application for graduation be carried, students must contact the Graduate School in writing and provide an explanation for the graduation delay. If students do not graduate a second time, the application for graduation will be dropped; they will then need to reapply for graduation by the appropriate deadline (and will be assessed a new application fee).

Validation of out-of-date graduate credit

A PSU course more than seven years old at the time of graduation, but no more than ten years old at the time of graduation, may be used toward master's degree requirements after a successful validation exam (for example, a course taken in fall 2010 may be validated for a graduation term no later than fall 2020). A separate validation examination must be given for each course, in accordance with the full requirements listed on the GO-15 form. Departments are expected to limit validation examinations to those courses that are current and relevant in the discipline and meet the current requirements of the master's degree program. Validated courses are limited to one third of the program requirements (e.g., 15 credits total in a 45-credit program). Each examination attempted, regardless of result, has a fee of $50.00, which will be credited to the department giving the exam. Payment must be arranged in advance of the exam through the Graduate School and Cashiers.

In very unusual cases, with the specific agreement of both the student's department and the department most equivalent to the original course department, a student may validate a graduate course from another regionally accredited institution, in accordance with the full requirements listed on the GO-15 form.

Human Research Protection Program

All research involving human subjects conducted by faculty, staff, or students in any program at PSU must have Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) approval. This policy applies to all research under the auspices of the University, including surveys and questionnaires, whether supported by grant, contract, gift, University, or personal funds. The student should allow a minimum of six weeks for the approval process. A student cannot have a thesis committee appointed until HRPP approval is granted.

Final examination

If a final examination is required by the student's department, it shall be taken after successful completion of any required second language examination and after at least 30 credits have been completed. The examination is not a re-examination over coursework but rather a test of the candidate's ability to integrate material in the major and related fields, including the work in any thesis or research project. A minimum of 1 graduate credit of registration is required when taking any final oral or written examination.

Oral examinations

In the case of a non-thesis oral examination, the committee shall consist of at least two members of the student's department, including the student's adviser. At the discretion of the department, a faculty member from another department may be added. For M.A.T. and M.S.T. students, one additional member of the committee is required to be a faculty member from the College of Education or a faculty member with pedagogical expertise in the student's discipline.

Non-thesis final oral examinations (including final project presentations) can only be held during regular academic terms, i.e., not between terms. Examinations must be scheduled and completed by the Friday of finals week for graduation in that term. For summer term graduation, the deadline applies to the regular eight-week summer session dates, i.e., exams must be scheduled and completed by the Friday of the eighth week of summer term.

Passing of the final oral examination requires a majority approval. If the student fails the entire examination or any section thereof, the department may dismiss the student from the master's program

or permit the student to repeat the entire examination, or the section that was failed, after a minimum of three months. The results of the second examination are final.

Written examinations

If a final written examination is required, it can only be held during regular academic terms, i.e., not between terms. Examinations must be scheduled and completed by the Friday of finals week for graduation in that term. For summer term graduation, the deadline applies to the regular eight-week summer session dates, i.e., exams must be scheduled and completed by the Friday of the eighth week of summer term.

If the student fails the entire examination or any section thereof, the department may dismiss the student from the master's degree program or permit the student to repeat the entire examination, or the section that was failed, after a minimum of three months. The results of the second examination are final.

Thesis

The presentation of a thesis as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master's degree is required in certain departments and is an option in others. Each school, college, and department defines the nature of research and scholarship accepted for a thesis, but in all cases a high level of resourcefulness, productivity, and mature perception of the discipline is expected. The quality of the culminating work must meet University standards and reflect those of other leading universities. Although the thesis is not required to show original results, it must reveal independent investigation, including the knowledge and application of the accepted methods of scholarship and research methodology. The thesis represents the independent work of the student and must be developed under the direction of the thesis adviser.

The thesis committee must be approved by the Graduate School using the GO-16M form in advance of the thesis defense. The committee must consist of at least three and not more than five faculty members. The chair of the thesis committee must be regular, full-time PSU instructional faculty, tenured or tenure track, assistant professor or higher in rank; the other committee members may be non-tenure track or adjunct faculty. Two of the committee members (the committee chair and one other member) must be from the student's department; the third member may be from the student's department or may be PSU faculty from another department or OHSU faculty. If it is necessary to go off campus for one additional committee member with specific expertise not available among PSU faculty, a CV for that proposed member must be presented with the GO-16M form; that member must be in addition to the required three PSU faculty members. All committee members must have master's degrees or higher.

Students must be registered for at least 1 graduate credit in every term in which they are working on any phase of their thesis, including data development or collection, writing, revision, defense, and finalization through approval by the Graduate School. Students must register for at least 6 to 9 credits of 503 Thesis in their department. (Since students must be continuously enrolled while working on the thesis, they frequently accumulate more than 9 credits of 503 Thesis. However, a maximum of 9 credit of 503 Thesis may be applied to the program of study.) IP (In Progress) is the interim grade reported until the thesis is defended and approved by the student's thesis committee. Final grades for thesis credits are not recorded until the thesis has been approved by the Graduate School.

A thesis defense may be scheduled only during the regular academic terms, no later than five weeks prior to the close of the term of application for graduation in which the degree will be granted (i.e., must be completed four weeks before the beginning of finals week). For summer term graduation, deadlines apply to the regular eight-week summer session dates. Later completion will result in graduation in a subsequent term. The student must deliver a final draft of the thesis to all members of the approved committee no fewer than 14 days before the thesis defense.

A thesis defense must take place in a meeting with the student and the entire, appointed committee. While it is expected that all members should be physically present, remote participation is permitted under specific conditions. The student's oral presentation should not exceed 60 minutes. The thesis defense is open to the University faculty and may be open to the public at the department's discretion. Passing of the thesis defense requires a majority approval. If the student fails the thesis defense, the department may dismiss the student from the master's program or permit the student to hold a second defense after a minimum of three months. The results of the second defense are final.

The final thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School not later than three weeks prior to the close of the term of application for graduation. See the Graduate Candidate Deadlines for specific dates. For details about thesis formatting and submission, see the Thesis and Dissertation Information available from the Graduate School.

Up one level

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