

## C. THE MASTER'S DEGREE

### C1.000 - Credit Requirements

Each program defines its own credit requirements and its own standards of quality and achievement. At least two years of graduate study are normally necessary for the master's degree. The following statements describe the Graduate Schools' minimum quantitative requirements for the master's degree.

**C1.100** - At least 30 semester graduate credits will be presented for the thesis or professional paper option, or at least 36 semester graduate credits for the nonthesis option.

**C1.200** - At least 20 semester credits, including those earned for the thesis or professional paper, will be in your major discipline.

**C1.300** - At least half the credits required for your degree (excluding a combined total of 10 semester credits for thesis and research) will be at the 500 or 600 level. To apply this rule to your course of study, subtract the number of thesis and research credits you completed (up to 10 semester credits only) from the minimum number of credits required for your degree. All courses used to meet graduation requirements must be at the graduate level.

**C1.400** - As of Fall Semester 2011 300 UG (Undergraduate/Graduate) courses will not count toward graduate degrees.

### C2.000 - Credits Earned on Campus

At least 12 semester credits are required to be earned on campus or from campus delivered distance coursework.

### C3.000 - Time Limits

All degree requirements for the master's degree, including the use of transfer and nondegree credits, must be completed within five years; six years for students in the School of Education. Courses that fall outside this time limit must be recertified for currency of knowledge.

### C4.000 - Second Master's Degree

Revision approved by Graduate Council: 02/16/2022

For the purposes of this policy dual and joint degrees are defined as follows:

A joint degree is a combined degree that allows students to obtain a single degree with a specialization in two related fields. A joint degree requires OCHE/BOR approval, and students that complete a joint degree will have this single joint degree listed on their transcript rather than two separate degrees. Note that this pathway should only be pursued if the joint degree is nationally recognized with a corresponding Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code.

A dual degree allows students to follow specified pathways in two different fields and concurrently receive two separate degrees. A dual degree requires that students complete the standards specified for each program separately, and students that complete a dual degree will have both degrees listed on their transcript. On the recommendation of both graduate programs, students working towards a dual Master's may apply up to nine credits to both degrees. Programs should apply professional, curricular, and accreditation standards when granting transfer credits so as to guarantee the integrity of their programs.

Formal program modification is required for exceptions to this policy. Such program modification requests should include clear rationales for how shared credits maintain each program's curricular and degree standards as well as adherence to accreditation standards, where applicable.

Current exceptions are listed here: For the MFA in Creative Writing, 24 semester credits from an MA in English may be applied. For the MFA in Fine Arts, 24 semester credits from an MA in Fine Arts may be applied. For the MPH, a maximum of 24 semester credits from the MPA may be applied. For the MPA, a maximum of 24 semester credits from the MPH may be applied. For the Social Work Program, a maximum of 24 credits from the MPH may be applied. For the MPH Program, a maximum of 24 credits from Social Work may be applied. For the MS in Pharmaceutical Sciences and Drug Design program, 12 credits of coursework in the PharmD program can be transferred if the student took the credits in graduate status to fulfill PharmD requirements.

### C5.000 - Transfer Credits for the Master's Degree

Students may transfer up to nine graduate/graduate non-degree semester credits or a full semester of graduate work on the recommendation of the program, after a semester of satisfactory work at UM. The transfer credits must meet the following requirements:

1. The courses must have been taken for graduate credit. This information is verified by the Graduate School when the student submits a transcript of the transfer coursework.
2. Grades must be either an A or a B.
3. Credits must be earned at an institution that offers a graduate degree in the discipline of the course being transferred.
4. Credits must be applicable to the degree being sought.

**C5.100** - Up to 30 semester graduate or graduate non-degree credits may be transferred to the MFA degree in Fine Arts, and up to 16 semester graduate or graduate non-degree credits to the MFA degree in Creative Writing.

**C5.200** - Credits that cannot be transferred into a UM graduate program:

1. Thesis or correspondence credits.
2. Extension credits outside the Montana university system.
3. Credits earned at the undergraduate level.
4. Credits taken in undergraduate or post-baccalaureate status, except in the specific programs outlined in **C5.300**.
5. Credits already used in completing a graduate degree program, except in the programs outlined in **C4.000**.

### New Policy: Accelerated Master's Degrees

#### **C5.300: Accelerated Master's Degrees**

Select programs can apply to Graduate Council for designation as an Accelerated Master's Degree, which provides their students an exemption from the rule prohibiting undergraduate credits to transfer to a Master's degree (**C5.240**).

The complete list of approved programs is as follows (updated May, 2019): Athletic Training, Journalism, Linguistics, Neuroscience (**max of 15 credits**), Philosophy, and Political Science. 12 credits of coursework in the PharmD program can be transferred into MS Pharmaceutical Sciences and Drug Design program. In addition, programs with approved MOUs

with affiliated institutions may seek this exception, including (updated September, 2019): Carroll College (UM MPA Program).

After approval by the Graduate Council, Faculty Senate, and the Board of Regents, these programs are authorized to admit select students into a graduate-level coursework in their fourth years, or when they have completed a minimum of 105 undergraduate credits and demonstrated their capacity to pursue graduate-level coursework successfully.

These programs must ask for a specific maximum of allowable credits (no more than 9 except in specific circumstances) to transfer from the undergraduate to the graduate degree. All credits transferred are subject to the policy on transfer credits (**C5.000**), with particular attention to the importance of students completing the "graduate increment" in 400-level courses designated UG, taken to fulfill a requirement for a Master's degree.

Students in these programs will not be formally admitted to the Graduate School until their undergraduate degree is complete, at which time the restricted credits will be transferred and the students will change officially to "Graduate Status."

## C6.000 - Thesis/Professional Paper Examining Committee

Each master's degree program must include a specific component of research or creative work and a comprehensive evaluation over the content of the discipline. In programs requiring a thesis or professional paper, these requirements are typically combined and overseen by the thesis/professional paper examining committee.

### C6.100 - Examining Committee Composition

The thesis/professional paper examining committee shall be comprised of a minimum of three voting members as follows:

1. A qualified UM faculty member or adjunct from the program or unit granting the degree who shall serve as chair;
2. A second qualified UM faculty member or adjunct from the program or unit granting the degree, or from a cooperating program or unit in the case of interdisciplinary degree programs;
3. A qualified UM faculty member or adjunct from a program or unit other than the one granting the degree whose primary responsibility is to ensure that the student is held to reasonable academic standards, that the student is treated fairly by all committee members, and that the student's progress is not unduly delayed by failure of committee members to act in a timely manner.

Upon the recommendation of the unit, one additional voting member who is a faculty affiliate, a faculty member of another institution of higher learning, or a non-academic expert may be appointed by the Graduate Dean, if he or she is uniquely qualified by training, experience, and/or degrees held to guide and evaluate the thesis or professional paper.

### C6.200 - Appointment of Examining Committee Members

Prospective committee members shall be chosen by the student in consultation with his or her academic advisor, and the program director or department chair shall forward the nominations to the dean of the Graduate School for his or her approval.

### C6.300 - Qualifications of Examining Committee Members

Individuals serving on thesis/professional paper committees must satisfy the qualifications standards set forth in G.1000 (<http://catalog.umt.edu/graduate/school-policies/qualifications-committee-members/>).

## C7.000 - Thesis/Professional Paper Defense

The thesis is a monographic or creative exercise representing an original scholarly contribution to a discipline. While conventions vary among disciplines, the professional paper is generally associated with the application of scholarly knowledge to specific professional settings. Both thesis and professional papers exhibit such substance and quality as to warrant eventual publication or exhibition.

**C7.100** - The student must complete one or more examinations (written, oral or both) relating to both the thesis (or professional paper) and the content of the discipline.

**C7.200** - The defense will normally occur well in advance of the end of the academic semester so the proper paperwork may be completed for the degree award process; the defense must be held by the end of the academic semester.

**C7.300** - Oral examinations are open to the public and guests may ask questions on recognition by the chair.

**C7.400** - For the student to pass, all committee members, voting privately, must judge the student's performance as satisfactory. In case of failure, one repeat examination is permitted.

For guidance in preparing your thesis or professional papers, please consult the Graduate School's Completing Your Master's Degree (<https://www.umt.edu/grad/current-students/completing-degree/masters-degree/default.php>) page.

## C8.000 - Comprehensive Evaluation over Content of Discipline

All master's degree students must pass a comprehensive evaluation. Examples of the comprehensive evaluation include but are not limited to a comprehensive oral or written exam, thesis/professional paper defense, portfolio assessment, or integrated project evaluation.