

MASTER'S DEGREES

Graduate Studies

Master's Programs Offered

See Programs Offered (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/prospective/programs/colleges>) for a current list of degrees and majors, Majors, Minors, and More (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/degrees/majors>) for related policy, and the Graduate School Glossary (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/glossary/#degrees>) for a better understanding of the different degrees.

UNL's professional master's programs — e.g., MArch, LLM — are not overseen by Graduate Studies or covered by Graduate Studies policy.

Core Requirements

A student progresses toward a master's degree by completing the sequence of Master's Degree Milestones (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/masters>) before their posted deadlines and while following these policies:

For All Master's Degrees

The **Memorandum of Courses** is filed before the halfway point — before grades (letter grades, no reports, or Incompletes) have been received in more than one half of the courses listed on the Memorandum — and on recommendation of the major and minor departments and approval of Graduate Studies.

- A student may NOT file a Memorandum and graduate in the same term.
- Students have **ten years** from the oldest course listed on the Memorandum to complete the degree. Courses exceeding this limit may not be used toward a master's degree.

A student is admitted to **Candidacy** for the master's degree when **admission deficiencies** have been removed and the Memorandum of Courses has been filed.

The student must **apply to graduate**.

The **Final Examination Report** is due in Graduate Studies at least four weeks (three weeks in summer) before the final exam, if required, but in no case later than four weeks before the final date for oral exams. The report will be accepted after all courses on the Memorandum have been completed or are in progress, and any Incompletes have been removed.

- **Written examinations** in major and minor fields, if required, must be passed at least one week prior to the oral exam.
- An **oral examination**, if required, is administered by the examining committee.
- See Examinations for the Master's Degree (p. 2) for full policy.

Additional For Option I (Thesis)

The **subject** of the thesis must be approved by the departmental Graduate Committee, and the thesis must conform in **style and form** to the guidelines in Preparing a Thesis or Dissertation (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/guidelines>).

The **preliminary thesis and abstract** must be approved prior to the oral exam.

- A Candidate is eligible to apply for the final oral exam or its waiver only after the completed thesis is **approved by the advisor**.
- An electronic copy of the thesis is due in **Graduate Studies** at least two weeks (one week in summer) prior to the oral exam, or if the oral exam is waived, no later than two weeks before the final date for oral exams.
- The thesis must be presented to the **examining committee** at least two weeks prior to the oral exam.

After successful completion of the oral exam, the **finalized thesis** is due in Graduate Studies for **final approval** prior to **upload and deposit**.

Research Responsibility

All research involving human or animal subjects must receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The IRB New Protocol Submission form is completed online via NUGrant (<http://nugrant.unl.edu>); the Application to Use Animals is available from the Office of Research Responsibility (<http://research.unl.edu/researchresponsibility/forms>).

Approval must be secured prior to the initiation of the research; the IRB and IACUC will not review projects already in progress. Evidence of IRB/IACUC approval must be submitted at the time the final thesis is filed.

Thesis and Non-Thesis: Options I, II, and III

The NU Graduate College offers master's degrees under **three Options**, except in a few departments where such a choice is not feasible.

For All Options

- No courses older than **10 years** will apply toward master's degree requirements at UNL.
- A written or oral **comprehensive examination** is required.
- Courses open only to graduate students are those numbered at the 900 level, or at the 800 level without counterparts at the 400 level or below.

Option I

- Minimum **30 cr**, including 20-24 cr of regular coursework.
- **Thesis required**, equivalent to 6-10 cr. At least half of the required work, including thesis, must be in one major subject.
- Minor optional, at least 9 cr.
- 8 cr, in addition to the thesis, must be in graduate-only courses.

Option II

- Minimum **36 cr**, a major and one or two minors.
- **No thesis** required.
- Minor required, at least 9 cr.
- At least 12 of the 36 cr must be in graduate-only courses.

MEd is only available as Option II.

Option III

- Minimum **36 cr**.
- **No thesis** required.
- **No minor** available.
- At least 18 of the 36 cr must be in graduate-only courses.

Accountancy MPA is only available as Option III; its students must earn at least 20 cr in graduate-only courses and at least 15 cr of those must be in Accountancy.

Change of Option

Students may change their declared Option at any time during the program of study with written approval from the advisor, the Chair of the Graduate Committee in the student's major, and the Dean for Graduate Studies. **The only exception to this policy is that students may not change from Option I to any other Option if certification of full-time status has been utilized.**

Comprehensive Examinations

Examination Requirement

All master's students are required to complete a **comprehensive examination – written and/or oral** as required by the appropriate academic departments.

- The **written exam**, if required, must be completed within **24 months** prior to the date of graduation.
- When an **oral examination** is required, the **examining committee** will consist of at least **three members** representing the major department and the minor department (if applicable), recommended by the major department and approved by Graduate Studies.
 - All professors on the examining committee must have Graduate Faculty status – full or Associate.
 - If a committee member **leaves the employ of the University or retires**, a replacement should be appointed. When continuing expertise is needed and the faculty member is willing to continue serving, the departing faculty member may remain as a member or co-chair of the committee, with approval of the department Graduate Committee and Graduate Studies.

For an **Option I** student's oral examination to be waived, the student must have completed a written examination within the 24 month time requirement, and the thesis must be approved in writing by a Graduate Faculty member in addition to the major advisor.

When the program includes a **minor**, the comprehensive examination in the minor field(s) (written and/or oral) may be waived subject to the approval of the minor department(s) provided all grades in the minor are at least a B or pass.

Examination Results

Upon **successful completion** of the examination(s), the student proceeds with steps outlined in the Master's Degree Milestones (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/masters>).

- When the examining committee's "pass" decision is **not unanimous** but only one examiner dissents, the student is to be approved for the degree. The dissenting member files a letter of explanation in Graduate Studies.
- If a student **fails to pass** the final oral or written examination, the committee files a report on the failure in Graduate Studies and indicates what the student must do before taking another examination. Another examination may not be held during the same term.