

# ACADEMIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

## Enrollment Options

### Degrees and Majors

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln offers many graduate programs (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/programs/>) leading to the doctoral degree, the master's degree, the educational specialist degree, and graduate certificates. To earn a graduate degree, students must choose a disciplinary major and meet all coursework and other academic requirements.

### Specializations

A specialization is a focused collection (subset) of courses within a major. Specializations must represent a minimum of 9 credit hours of the degree requirements. Students may choose a specialization at the time of application or later when submitting a master's Memorandum of Courses or doctoral Program of Studies. A specialization is listed with the major on official transcripts.

### Concurrent Degrees

Graduate students may be admitted to two degree programs simultaneously with approval of each Graduate Program Committee and the Dean(s) for Graduate Studies. Concurrent degrees may be pursued on multiple campuses of the University of Nebraska system. Concurrent degrees may be pursued by two possible routes:

- **Coordinated Dual Degree Programs:** Established dual degree programs shall appear as a single application on the Graduate Application for Admission. (An exception is the College of Law dual degree programs that require two separate applications.) With the required approval, credit hours may be shared between both degrees. Specific courses to be shared must be identified at the time coordinated programs are established. Coordinated programs result in the conferral of two degrees. Both diplomas must be awarded in the same commencement term if credit hours are shared.
- **Independent Concurrent Degrees:** Pursuit of two unrelated graduate degrees requires two separate applications and two application fees. Application to each degree program need not occur in the same term. Each degree program is administered independently of each other; however, approval by each Graduate Program Committee and the Dean(s) for Graduate Studies is required. Credit hours may be shared between both degrees. Specific courses to be shared must be identified at the time of approval. Completion of requirements for independent concurrent degrees results in the conferral of two degrees. Both diplomas must be awarded in the same commencement term if credit hours are shared.

SOURCE:

- Executive Graduate Council Minutes (March 19, 1992)
- UNL Graduate Council Minutes (September 5, 2019)

### One Degree, Double Major

Students pursuing a master's degree may add a second major, with approval of the Graduate Program Committees of each major. Students approved for a double major must meet the minimum requirements for each major, including at least 18 hours in each major, excluding cross-

listed courses in the second major. The precise number of credits may vary depending on the total required hours for a particular major. For each major, students must take at least 8 credits in courses open only to graduate students (900 level or 800 level without an undergraduate level counterpart), excluding thesis hours.

Students are required to satisfy the comprehensive examination schedule—written and/or oral examination—for each major. The examination committee shall consist of two graduate faculty members (or non-graduate faculty approved to perform specified graduate faculty duties) from each of the major departments/areas. The committee shall be co-chaired by a faculty member from each of the major departments.

SOURCE:

- UNL Graduate Council Minutes (April 27, 1995)

### Minors

A minor for the master's degree under any option must consist of at least 9 credit hours and may be taken in any one department or interdepartmental area that has been approved to offer a major leading to a master's degree. In addition, the minor may, in certain departments, be completed in a subdivision of the administrative department. Approved fields of study, which may be selected within each administrative department, must be approved by the Graduate Council for use as a minor.

A minor for the doctoral degree must include at least 15 credit hours with 6 hours in courses open exclusively to graduate students (900 level or 800 level without an undergraduate level counterpart). It may be taken in any department that has been approved to offer a major leading to a master's degree. In addition, the minor for the doctorate in certain departments may be completed in a subdivision of the administrative department. Approved fields of study, which may be selected within each administrative department, must be approved by the Graduate Council for use as a minor.

### Graduate Certificates

A graduate certificate is an academic credential awarded to a student upon completion of required coursework in a specific subject area. Graduate certificate programs are post-baccalaureate and consist of 12-20 credit hours. Students may be admitted to a graduate certificate and graduate degree program simultaneously, although admission to a degree program is not required. At the discretion of a student's supervisory committee, credit hours earned in a certificate program may apply to a degree program.

SOURCE:

- UNL Graduate Council Minutes (January 22, 1979)
- Executive Graduate Council Minutes (March 15, 1979)
- Board of Regents Minutes (July 15, 2000)

### Non-Degree Coursework

Students meeting the minimum admission requirements (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/policies/admission/>) may enroll in graduate courses. Acceptance in a graduate certificate or degree program is not required. Non-degree admission carries no guarantee of future admission to a degree program, nor does it guarantee that coursework completed as a non-degree student can later be applied toward a degree. Non-degree admission is not available to international students on F-1 student visas.

## Teacher Certification and Added Endorsements

UNL offers graduate courses leading to the State of Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) initial teacher certification, renewal of teacher certification, and added endorsements. Teacher certification is granted by the NDE, not the University. Coursework leading to certification can be completed at UNL. The NDE determines the content requirements; the University delivers the courses.

## Doctoral Degrees Overview of Programs

UNL Graduate Studies oversees four doctoral degrees:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Doctor of Education (EdD)
- Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)
- Doctor of Audiology (AuD) – *As of October 1, 2016, the AuD is administered by Graduate Studies. Revisions to this catalog to include the AuD are not yet complete.*

See Programs Offered (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/programs/>) for a current list of degrees and majors, Enrollment Options (above) for related policy, and the Graduate School Glossary (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/glossary/#degrees>) for a better understanding of the different degrees.

*UNL also offers additional professional doctoral programs – e.g., JD, DPH, DVM – which are not overseen by Graduate Studies or covered by Graduate Studies policy.*

To qualify for a doctoral degree, it is the student's responsibility to meet the following requirements as part of the Doctoral Degree Milestones (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/doctoral-degree-steps-to-completion/>):

1. Establish a Supervisory Committee (p. 2) prior to completion of one half of the doctoral coursework.
2. Complete a Program of Studies (p. 3), approved by the Supervisory Committee and filed in Graduate Studies prior to completion of one half of the doctoral coursework.
3. Achieve academic residency (p. 3).
4. Pass a comprehensive examination (p. 3) – in the major and minor fields of study.
5. Achieve candidacy (p. 4) and satisfy requirements for registration during candidacy.
6. Prepare a dissertation (for PhD or EdD) or doctoral document (for AuD or DMA), pass a final examination (p. 4) (defense), and submit the approved final version to the University.
7. Complete all work for the doctoral degree within eight years of filing the Program of Studies in Graduate Studies.

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 NURamp (<https://nuramp.nebraska.edu/login/>); 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 dissertation is filed.

## Supervisory Committee

The Supervisory Committee shall approve the student's Program of Studies; monitor the student's academic progress; approve the dissertation subject; prepare, give and evaluate the comprehensive examination; approve the final dissertation; and prepare, give and evaluate the final examination. (*SOURCE: Graduate College Policy Handbook, 2018*)

A Supervisory Committee is established **before a doctoral student has accumulated 45 credit hours**, including any transfer hours, but excluding research or language tools. Prior to the approval of the student's Program of Studies, the Supervisory Committee is appointed by the Dean for Graduate Studies based on a recommendation of the departmental or interdepartmental Graduate Committee in the student's major.

The Supervisory Committee consists of at least four members of the Graduate Faculty (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/policies/faculty/>) or non-Graduate Faculty approved to perform specified Graduate Faculty duties. At least one Graduate Faculty member external to the academic department or program, but within the University of Nebraska Graduate College, must be included on the committee to serve as the Outside Representative. If the student is pursuing a minor, the committee member from the minor department may serve as the Outside Representative.

Graduate Faculty with **emeritus status** may co-chair the supervisory committees of doctoral students with a resident Graduate Faculty member.

## Member Roles

- **Chair or Co-chair:** The Chair or Co-chair of a doctoral student's committee serves as the advisor and mentor of the student. The Chair or Co-chair may not serve as the Outside Representative or as a designated Reader.
- **Reader:** Two members of the committee are designated as Readers. They and the Chair read the draft(s) of the dissertation to determine whether the student is ready to defend. Special Members and Outside Representatives may serve as Readers.
- **Outside Representative:** The role of the Outside Representative is to broaden the scholarly representation of the student's committee and to provide an impartial perspective. If the student is seeking a minor, the faculty member representing the student's minor may serve as the Outside Representative.
- **Special Member:** A faculty member from another institution external to the University of Nebraska system may serve as an "extra" committee member. Only one Special Member may serve on a supervisory committee. Special Members have voting rights on the committee. A Special Member may serve as a Reader, but may not serve as the Outside Representative.

## Changes to the Committee

Changes may be made to a Supervisory Committee any time prior to the submission of the Application for Final Oral Exam using a change request form as described in the Doctoral Milestones (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/doctoral-degree-steps-to-completion/>).

If the Supervisory Committee **Chair** leaves the employ of the University, or retires or is otherwise unable to serve on the Committee, Graduate

Studies must be notified immediately and a change in the Committee made as follows:

- If the student has achieved Candidacy, the former chair who has left may continue to serve as co-chair of the Supervisory Committee, with approval of the departmental Graduate Committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies. A second co-chair must be appointed who is a resident Graduate Faculty member.
- If the student has not achieved Candidacy, a new chair of the Supervisory Committee who is a resident Graduate Faculty member must be appointed immediately, with the agreement of the departmental/school Graduate Program Committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies.

If a **member other than the Chair** leaves the employ of the University or retires, a replacement should be appointed who is a resident graduate faculty member. When continuing expertise is needed and the faculty member is willing to continue serving, he/she may continue as a member of the Supervisory Committee, with the approval of the Supervisory Committee Chair and the concurrence of the Dean for Graduate Studies.

## Program of Studies

### Program Requirements

The Program of Studies must be filed in Graduate Studies prior to completion of half the coursework for the doctoral program.

- At least half of the graduate work, including the dissertation, will be completed in the student's major.
- It must contain sufficient credit hours:
  - PhD: At least 90 credit hours, including 12 to 55 hours of dissertation research.
  - EdD: At least 96 credit hours, including 6 hours of research tools and 12 to 55 hours of dissertation research.
  - DMA: At least 90 credit hours, including a minimum of 3 hours doctoral document research.
  - AuD: At least 87 credit hours.
- It must include any departmental language or research tool requirements.
- It must be filed within the same semester as the appointment of the Supervisory Committee.
- The time limit on granting the doctoral degree is eight years from the time of filing the student's Program of Studies in Graduate Studies.

Any subsequent change in the program is approved by the Supervisory Committee and the action reported to Graduate Studies in writing.

The Supervisory Committee will determine what course work taken prior to filing of a Program of Studies, including hours earned toward the master's degree(s), will be accepted as part of the program's 87-96 hours.

- The Supervisory Committee is not obligated to reduce the doctoral Program of Studies by applying course work completed prior to its appointment.
- Prior course work is assessed in relation to its contribution to framing a research foundation for the degree. Each course accepted must be current and relevant in relation to the desired degree.
- No graduate credit will be accepted from a previously awarded doctoral degree at any institution, including UNL.

## Language and Tools

There is no uniform language or research tool requirement for UNL Graduate Studies. Students should contact their Graduate Chair for specific departmental requirements.

All required language or research tools requirements for the student's program should be listed on the Program of Studies by the Supervisory Committee and be satisfied prior to filing the Application for Admission to Candidacy, which is due at least seven months before the scheduled final oral examination.

## Academic Residency

Academic residency requires the doctoral student to enroll in a specified number of hours related to the degree within a specific timeframe. This ensures that each doctoral program is reasonably compact, continuous, and cohesive, and that a substantial portion is done under close supervision by the University. No additional hours over and above those for the required program of studies will be needed to fulfill academic residency.

For a student beginning a doctoral program:

- With a **bachelor's degree**: The requirement is 27 hours of graduate work within a consecutive 18-month period, and 15 of these 27 hours must be taken after receiving a master's along the way or completing 30 hours.
- With a **master's degree**: The requirement is 27 hours of graduate work within a consecutive 18-month period.
- As **University staff or a person employed full-time in their major field**: The requirement is 24 credit hours of graduate work within a consecutive two-year period, and 12 of these 24 hours must be taken after receiving a master's along the way or completing 30 hours. For registration restrictions, refer to University Staff Exemption (<https://nebraska.edu/faculty-and-staff/resources/employee-dependent-scholarship-program/>).

The academic residency requirement must be met **prior to the scheduling of the final oral exam**.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is clear that the purpose of residency will be fulfilled although the above formal conditions are not met, the student's Supervisory Committee may, with the approval of the Dean for Graduate Studies, designate an alternative procedure for satisfying the residency requirements.

## Comprehensive Examination

When a student has substantially completed studies in the doctoral program, the student must pass a written comprehensive examination in the major and minor fields of study. At the discretion of the supervisory committee, an oral comprehensive examination may also be required.

## Requirement and Scheduling

The Supervisory Committee arranges for comprehensive examinations at least seven months prior to the final oral examination (defense).

- The **written** comprehensive examination is an investigation of the student's breadth of understanding of the field of knowledge of which his/her special subject is a part. It is not a repetition of course examinations.
- An **oral** comprehensive examination may be required at the discretion of the Supervisory Committee. The oral exam may include the minor or related fields in addition to the major field of study. If an oral exam

is required, it is part of the comprehensive exam requirements to be met before candidacy.

### Examination Results

Upon successful completion of comprehensive exams, an **Application for Candidacy** should be filed as described in Doctoral Milestones (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/doctoral-degree-steps-to-completion/>).

Otherwise, if the Supervisory Committee determines that the student has failed the comprehensive examination:

1. A letter is submitted by the chair of the Supervisory Committee to the Dean for Graduate Studies stating the conditions under which the student may attempt another examination.
2. Only one attempt may be made per academic term. Only two attempts overall are permitted, unless additional attempts are approved by the Supervisory Committee.

### Candidacy

The Supervisory Committee files the **Application for Admission to Candidacy** as described in Doctoral Milestones (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/doctoral-degree-steps-to-completion/>) once the student has:

- Met any provisional admission requirements
- Satisfied language and research tool requirements
- Passed the comprehensive examination(s)

This form must be filed in Graduate Studies at least seven months prior to the final oral examination (defense).

### Continuous Registration

Once candidacy is achieved, the student must register for **at least one credit hour each fall and spring** until they graduate, even after meeting the total dissertation hours on their Program.

- **Failure to register will result in termination of candidacy and program.**
- Academic Leave (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/academic-leave/>) can, for eligible students, provide an exception to the continuous registration requirement.
- Candidates do not need to register for **summer** unless required by their department during an assistantship, for a student visa, to defer student loans, or for Health Center access.

### Credit Hours

Doctoral candidates may need to register for additional hours due to the following factors.

- To be exempted from withholding for FICA (Social Security) and Medicare, candidates being paid as graduate assistants must either have full-time status or register for 6 cr each term.
- Campus Services/Facilities: Graduate students registered for at least 1 cr per term are able to access the University Health Center (<http://health.unl.edu/>), University Libraries (<http://libraries.unl.edu/>), and Campus Recreation Center (<http://crec.unl.edu/>). Additional charges may be incurred based on use.
- Health Insurance (<https://studentaccounts.unl.edu/tuition-fees/student-health-insurance/>): All UNL students enrolled in at least 6 cr or full-time certified are eligible to purchase this plan. Graduate assistants and international students are automatically enrolled in health insurance.

- Eligibility for financial aid (<https://financialaid.unl.edu/apply-funds/who-qualifies/>) typically requires enrollment of 5 cr per fall or spring. It also involves the fraction of attempted credit hours completed successfully (<https://financialaid.unl.edu/maintaining-eligibility/satisfactory-academic-progress/>) and whether the student has exceeded a maximum number of credit hours allowed for a degree objective.

### Full-Time Status

Full-time status normally requires 9 cr each fall and spring. However, Candidates enrolling in at least 1 credit hour per term can be classified as full-time if they request and are approved for Certification of Full-Time Status (<https://go.unl.edu/gradfulltime/>) before each term.

Doctoral students may use full-time certification for a maximum of two consecutive years. To maintain full-time status beyond that, a candidate must again register for at least 9 cr each fall/spring.

### Tuition and Fees

**Retaining Resident Rate:** Candidates who were classified as Nebraska residents for tuition purposes and relocate out of the state while maintaining continuous enrollment remain eligible for resident tuition.

**All But Dissertation (ABD):** Students who have completed all courses on the Program and who are registering for dissertation (999) hours in excess of the requirements of the Program to maintain continuous registration are eligible for a waiver of the non-resident portion of tuition. To qualify for this benefit, students must (1) have grades for all courses on the Program of Studies except for dissertation (999) hours and (2) send email to [graduatedocuments@unl.edu](mailto:graduatedocuments@unl.edu) requesting this benefit. Once approved, this status remains in effect until the student graduates.

## Dissertation and Final Oral Exam

### Dissertation Requirements

The **dissertation** is of no fixed length. Students work with their advisor and/or Supervisory Committee to determine the subject of the dissertation.

The **dissertation abstract** may not exceed 350 words in length.

See Preparing a Dissertation (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/degrees/guidelines/>) for formatting required by Graduate Studies. Style guidelines are determined by the student's specific discipline.

### Reading Committee

Following approval by the major advisor, the dissertation and abstract should be presented to the Reading Committee for review at least four weeks prior to the oral examination. The Reading Committee consists of two members from the Supervisory Committee, excluding the Chair or Co-chair.

An Application for Final Oral Exam (<https://graduate.unl.edu/sites/unl.edu/executive-vice-chancellor-graduate-studies/files/media/file/Doctoral-FinalOral.pdf>) is due in Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense, indicating that the committee chair(s) and the readers have read the dissertation, find it suitable for a defense, and grant permission for the defense to be held. All committee members should be given sufficient time to read the dissertation prior to the defense.

If only one member of the Reading Committee dissents, the dissertation defense or oral exam may proceed upon written recommendation by



the supervisory committee, accompanying the Application for Final Oral Exam.

### Final Oral Examination

Approval of the dissertation is solely the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee. The academic expectations and standards of acceptability for dissertations, as established by each departmental Graduate Committee, shall be the benchmark by which dissertations are judged. No individual or organization other than the University of Nebraska graduate faculty (or non-graduate faculty members granted permission to serve on Supervisory Committees) may participate in judging the acceptability of a dissertation, including (but not limited to) journal editors, peer reviewers, and adjudicators.

Submission of manuscripts or other works for publication shall not be a requirement for the graduate degree. This does not preclude departmental Graduate Committees from stating in their graduate handbooks the expectation that a dissertation should yield publication-quality research or juried works; nor does it prevent graduate students from submitting manuscripts and publishing articles prior to defending their dissertation.

The final oral examination must be scheduled for a date when a majority of the Supervisory Committee, including the Chair(s), are available for the examination. Exceptions may be made only by permission of the Dean for Graduate Studies.

The final examination for the doctoral degree is oral and open to the University community and the public.

- The Supervisory Committee determines the defense's character and length. The examination may be devoted to the special field of the dissertation or to the Candidate's general knowledge, or it may be designed to test judgment and critical powers.
- All persons may be present during the dissertation presentation and general questioning. However, this is followed by a closed questioning portion of the examination for which all persons except the Candidate, Supervisory Committee, and invited faculty must be excused.
- The final oral examination over the dissertation may be waived only with the consent of the Dean for Graduate Studies.

The Supervisory Committee reports the results of the final oral examination to Graduate Studies.

1. If the committee agrees unanimously that the student has passed: A Report of Completion (<https://graduate.unl.edu/sites/unl.edu/executive-vice-chancellor/graduate-studies/files/media/file/Doctoral-Completion.pdf>) is signed by all committee members present for the defense.
2. If only one member dissents: The dissenting member files a letter of explanation in Graduate Studies, but the student is approved for the degree and a Report of Completion is signed accordingly.
3. If more than one member dissents: The student fails to pass the final oral exam. The committee files a report on the failure in Graduate Studies, indicating what the student must do before attempting another examination. A student may attempt a final oral exam only once per term.

### Depositing

Following the successful completion of the oral examination, the student should complete the remaining Doctoral Milestones ([graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/doctoral-degree-steps-to-completion/](https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/doctoral-degree-steps-to-completion/)).

Only abstracts and dissertations that meet all published requirements can be approved and stamped for depositing.

Depositing also involves payment of a processing fee and, if applicable, a fee to register a copyright.

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## Master's Degrees

### Options for the Master's Degree

The Graduate College offers the following master's degrees:

- Master of Arts (MA)
- Master of Architectural Engineering (MAE)
- Master of Applied Science (MAS)
- Master of Arts for Teachers (MAT)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP)
- Master of Education (MEd)
- Master of Engineering Management (MEM)
- Master of Fine Arts (MFA)
- Master of Legal Studies (MLS)
- Master of Music (MM)
- Master of Professional Accountancy (MPA)
- Master of Science (MS)
- Master of Science for Teachers (MST)

A master's degree student may pursue a specific major under Option A (thesis required) or Option B (thesis not required). The major for the master's degree under either option is comprised of approved courses in any department offering a program leading to the master's degree. Some limitations concerning options may be imposed by a department where such a choice is not feasible. In choosing an option, a student should be guided by the type of training desired. A master's degree student may change a declared option during their program of study with written approval from the adviser, 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 A to Option B if certification of full time status (<https://go.unl.edu/gradfulltime/>) has been utilized.

Submission of manuscripts or other works for publication shall not be a requirement for the graduate degree. This does not preclude departmental Graduate Committees from stating in their graduate handbooks the expectation that a thesis should yield publication-quality research or juried works; nor does it prevent graduate students from submitting manuscripts and publishing articles prior to defending their thesis.

### Option A

The master's degree under Option A requires a thesis. Option A is most appropriate for students who are preparing for careers in research and scholarly work or additional academic pursuits beyond the master's degree. Under this option, a student must earn a minimum of 30 credit hours, consisting of 20 to 24 credit hours of regular course work, plus a thesis equivalent to 6 to 10 credit hours. At least one-half of the credit hours required for the degree, including thesis, must be in the major (at least 18 credit hours for the Master of Education degree). The remaining work may be in supporting courses and may comprise a minor consisting

of at least 9 credit hours selected from and approved by the minor department. At least 8 credit hours, excluding thesis, must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students (900 level or 800 level without 400 or lower counterparts).

*Option A is not available for the Master of Professional Accountancy degree.*

**Thesis Requirements.** The subject of the thesis shall be chosen from the student's field of major interest and must be approved by the departmental Graduate Committee. The thesis should reveal a capacity to carry on independent study or research and should demonstrate the student's ability to use the techniques employed in their field of investigation. Research activities involving human subjects or live vertebrate animals may not be conducted at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln unless the research activities have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate board or committee. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews projects involving human subject research and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) reviews the use of animals in research. These reviews are in accordance with Federal regulations, state laws and institutional policies. Submission of protocols to conduct human subject or animal research is coordinated by the Research Responsibility (<https://research.unl.edu/researchresponsibility/>) offices. Approval must be secured prior to the initiation of the research.

The thesis must conform to the required style and format described in Steps to Degree Completion (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/masters-degree-steps-to-completion/>). A copy of the thesis and abstract must be approved by the student's major advisor and submitted for preliminary review to the Master's Programs Coordinator in the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks (one week in the summer sessions) before the date of the candidate's final oral examination. A candidate is not eligible for the oral examination until the thesis is completed and approved. After passing the final oral examination, the thesis must be electronically submitted to the Master's Programs Coordinator for a final review prior to being uploaded to Digital Commons.

### Option B

The master's degree under Option B does not require a thesis. Option B is most appropriate for students pursuing practice-based or professional careers in which the master's degree provides suitable training. Under Option B, a student must earn a minimum of 30 credit hours. At least one-half of the credit hours required for the degree must be in the major. The remaining work may be in supporting courses and may comprise a minor consisting of at least 9 credit hours selected from and approved by the minor department. At least 15 credit hours must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students (900 level or 800 level without 400 or lower counterparts).

*The Master of Professional Accountancy plan of study may not include a minor.*

*The Master of Education plan of study may not include a minor, but must include at least 6 credit hours of education courses outside the major.*

## Time to complete a Master's Degree

A master's degree student is expected to complete all degree requirements within five years of their first term of admission to the master's degree program, unless the student is enrolled in a program with a different time limit that has been approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. Graduate courses taken prior to the start of the master's degree program and not counted toward a previously awarded graduate degree

may be included on the student's Memorandum of Courses, provided the previous courses were taken within 10 years at the time of degree completion.

## Memorandum of Courses

The Memorandum of Courses must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies before the student has completed more than one-half of the prescribed program. Prior to submission, the Memorandum of Courses must be approved by the student's adviser, the major departmental or area Graduate Committee Chair, and the minor department Graduate Committee Chair (if applicable). It is the student's responsibility to secure the proper approvals and to submit to the Master's Programs Coordinator, as described in Steps to Degree Completion (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/masters-degree-steps-to-completion/>). Final review and approval of the Memorandum of Courses is made by the Dean for Graduate Studies. A student may NOT file a Memorandum of Courses and graduate in the same semester or summer term.

## Admission to Candidacy

A student is admitted to Candidacy for the master's degree when admission deficiencies, if any, have been removed and when a Memorandum of Courses receives final approval.

## Final Comprehensive Examination

A student pursuing a Master's degree is required to complete a final comprehensive examination, administered as a written and/or oral examination, within 24 months prior to the date of graduation. The comprehensive examination is required to cover the student's approved program of study, as specified by the major and minor (if applicable) departments. The comprehensive examination in the minor field(s) may be waived subject to the approval of the minor department(s), provided all grades in the minor department are at least a B or pass.

If an oral examination is required, the examining committee, approved by the Dean for Graduate Studies on recommendation of the major department, will consist of at least three members representing the major and minor (if applicable) departments. All professors on the examining committee must either be on the Graduate Faculty, or be non-Graduate Faculty approved to perform specified Graduate Faculty duties. If a member of the examining committee other than the chair leaves the employ of the University, or retires, a replacement should be appointed. In certain circumstances where continuing expertise is needed, the departing faculty member may continue as a member or co-chair of the committee, with approval of the department Graduate Committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies. If the master's degree is being earned under Option I without a final oral examination, the thesis must be approved in writing by a Graduate Faculty member in addition to the major adviser.

In the event that members of an oral examining committee are not unanimous regarding passing a Candidate, the student is to be approved for the degree if only one examiner dissents. In such cases, the dissenting member of the committee will be expected to file a letter of explanation in the Office of Graduate Studies.

If a student fails to pass the final oral or written examination for an advanced degree, their committee must file a report on the failure in the Office of Graduate Studies and indicate what the student must do before taking another examination. Another examination may not be held during the same semester or the same summer term in which the student failed.

## Master's Thesis

The master's thesis and abstract in preliminary form must be approved by the adviser prior to applying for the final oral examination or for its waiver (at least four weeks prior to the examination). An electronic copy of the thesis and abstract in preliminary form must be submitted to Master's Programs Coordinator in the Office of Graduate Studies for approval at least two weeks (one week in summer) prior to the final oral examination. This copy will be reviewed and the student notified of any changes to be made. The guidelines for thesis preparation and submission deadlines are described in Steps to Degree Completion (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/masters-degree-steps-to-completion/>).

## Educational Specialists Degree

A student progresses toward the Ed.S. degree by completing the sequence of Ed.S. Milestones (<https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/educational-specialist-eds-degree-steps-to-completion/>) before their posted deadlines and while following these policies:

The **Supervisory Committee** is established prior to completion of 42 credit hours of the Ed.S. program's required coursework. A Supervisory Committee consisting of three graduate faculty is appointed with approval by the department's Graduate Committee Chair.

The **Program of Studies** is filed prior to completion of 42 credit hours of the Ed.S. program's required coursework.

- A minimum of **66 credit hours** beyond the baccalaureate degree is required for the Ed.S. The student must complete **at least 24 credit hours after approval of the Program**.
- While specific requirements are determined by departments, in general 40 to 50 hours will be in core courses within the unit or closely related units, 3 hours or more will be research, 6 hours or more will be practicum, and 6 or more hours will be electives.
- The time limit on granting the Ed.S. degree is **six years** from the time of filing the Program in Graduate Studies.

A written **Comprehensive Examination**, developed by the Supervisory Committee, is administered when the program is substantially complete. The committee determines the nature and duration of the examinations.

Once the student has met all requirements for the Ed.S. degree, a **Final Report Form** is signed by all Supervisory Committee members and submitted to Graduate Studies.

## Graduate Certificates

A graduate certificate comprises a set of credit-bearing graduate courses representing a specific subject area. Graduate certificates are designed for post-baccalaureate students seeking to enhance their educational portfolio. See Graduate Certificates (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/programs/grad-cert/>) for course requirements.

A graduate certificate requires at least 12 hours of graduate coursework past the bachelor's degree, but not more than 20 hours. For students pursuing more than one certificate, sharing of credits is limited to 3 hours, provided each certificate has a minimum of 12 hours of non-shared credits. Shared credits cannot count toward more than two certificates. **The minimum grade for certificate courses must meet the Scholastic Grade Requirements** (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/policies/grades/>) **for graduate-level courses**. Courses taken to fulfill requirements for a graduate certificate and later applied toward

a graduate degree must meet the minimum grade requirements for the degree, which may be higher.

Admission to and enrollment in a graduate certificate program occurs independently of graduate (master's and doctoral) degree programs. Students may pursue a graduate certificate and graduate degree simultaneously, although concurrent enrollment is not required. Certificate courses taken at the University of Nebraska may count toward a graduate degree. Courses taken and applied toward a previously awarded graduate degree or certificate cannot be counted toward a future graduate certificate. Courses completed at institutions other than the University of Nebraska cannot count toward a graduate certificate.

## Endorsements and Teaching Certification

Educator certifications — in particular, the Teaching Certificate (initial or renewal), Administrative Certificate (initial or renewal), and various endorsements — are granted by the State of Nebraska's Department of Education (<http://www.education.ne.gov/TCERT/>) rather than by UNL.

For more information refer to Programs: Teacher Certification (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/programs/teacher-certifications/>) or consult UNL's certification officer (<http://cehs.unl.edu/cehs/renewing-your-teaching-certification/>).

## Guidelines for Probation and Termination

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln ("UNL") may modify these guidelines from time to time within its discretion, without prior notice, and shall be the sole determiner as to how these guidelines are interpreted.

### Basis for Taking Academic Action

Graduate students at UNL are expected to maintain a high level of achievement in their graduate studies and to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and all relevant policies. Accordingly, UNL reserves the right to act with respect to any graduate student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress or who violates any provision of the Student Code of Conduct or relevant policy. Such action may include, without limitation, placing the student on academic probation, suspending or terminating the student from a degree or certificate program, or precluding the student from pursuing any further graduate studies at UNL.

Academic action may be taken against a graduate student based on any of the following:

1. Violation of the Student Code of Conduct (<https://studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct/>) or any other UNL, college or departmental policy. A violation of the Student Code of Conduct may be used as a basis for terminating a student from a program only after the violation has been reported and properly confirmed;
2. Unsatisfactory academic performance, including failing to satisfy UNL's Scholastic Grade Requirements (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/policies/grades/>); failing to pass qualifying examinations, preliminary examinations, comprehensive examinations or final degree examinations; failing to master the methodology and content of one's field in a manner that is sufficient to successfully complete a thesis or dissertation; or
3. Failing to satisfy the requirements for the removal of probationary status or conditional admission.

Graduate Committees may adopt and impose additional conditions under which a graduate student may be subject to academic action, provided that such conditions are approved in advance by the Dean for

Graduate Studies and are communicated in writing to all students who are subjected to those conditions. Graduate programs shall include any additional conditions in the program's governance documents.

A graduate student who is terminated from one degree or certificate program may apply to a different degree or certificate program, except when the termination is based on a violation of the Student Code of Conduct or when the student is precluded from pursuing any further graduate studies at UNL.

## Procedure for Academic Action

Academic action taken against a graduate student is initiated by the department, school or interdepartmental Graduate Committee, whether acting alone or upon the recommendation of the student's advisor or supervisory committee.

A decision to place a student on probation will be shared with the student and forwarded to the Dean for Graduate Studies. Conditions of the probation will be communicated to the student in writing.

A recommendation to terminate a student's degree or certificate program or preclude the student from pursuing any further graduate studies at UNL will be addressed in the following manner:

1. The Graduate Committee Chair will promptly inform the student in writing of the recommendation, the reason(s) given for the recommendation, and the name of the individual(s) making the recommendation.
  2. The Graduate Committee Chair will provide the student with the opportunity to confer directly with the individual(s) making the recommendation through an in-person meeting or a telephone or video conference. *The student will be given at least one-week advance notice of this meeting or conference.*
  3. The student will be granted the opportunity to respond to the recommendation verbally or in writing, or both, which will be documented and taken into consideration by the Graduate Committee Chair. The Graduate Committee Chair will consider any extenuating circumstances communicated by the student and will seek to determine whether the matter can be resolved.
  4. After considering the student's response, if the decision is made to proceed with the recommendation to terminate the student's program or preclude the student from pursuing any further graduate studies, the Graduate Committee Chair will inform both the student and the Dean for Graduate Studies of that decision in writing, including the basis of the decision.
  5. The Dean for Graduate Studies will investigate the matter within 30 days and decide whether to proceed with terminating the student's program or precluding that student from pursuing any further graduate studies at UNL.
  6. If the Dean for Graduate Studies decides to proceed with terminating the student's program or precluding that student from pursuing any further graduate studies at UNL, the Dean will inform the student of that decision in writing and advise the student of the right to appeal the decision.
1. To initiate an appeal, the student must submit a written request for an appeal to the Dean for Graduate Studies, who will act as the chair of the UNL Graduate Council, within thirty (30) calendar days after receiving the Dean's decision. Although the Dean for Graduate Studies serves as the chair of the UNL Graduate Council, the Dean will not participate in deliberations leading to, nor vote on, the appeal decision of the UNL Graduate Council.
  2. The affected student is responsible for submitting all information that the student wants the UNL Graduate Council to consider as part of the appeal. The written appeal must include the following:
    - a. A full description of the basis on which the student is bringing the appeal;
    - b. A full description of the remedy being sought by the student; and
    - c. Copies of all documentation supporting the student's appeal.
  3. After taking into consideration all information and documentation submitted by the student in conjunction with the appeal, and taking into consideration the letter(s) recommending probation or termination, the UNL Graduate Council will render its decision. That decision will be communicated in writing to the student, the individual(s) who made the initial recommendation, and the Graduate Committee overseeing the student's graduate program. In most cases, this decision will serve as the final decision.

## Appeals to the Executive Graduate Council

In most cases, the decision of the UNL Graduate Council will be final. Only under special circumstances will the Executive Graduate Council hear an appeal from the decision of the UNL Graduate Council.

1. There is no absolute right of appeal to the Executive Graduate Council. The Executive Graduate Council will accept appeals only in those cases where in the exercise of its sole discretion it shall first find that one or more of the following grounds for accepting the appeal exist:
  - a. That the UNL Graduate Council has violated some element of fair procedure (example: has failed to allow the parties concerned to present their cases fully to the UNL Graduate Council);
  - b. That the UNL Graduate Council has failed to examine or give adequate weight to important evidence relevant to one party's position;
  - c. That the UNL Graduate Council has given undue weight to evidence not pertinent to the case; or
  - d. That some gross miscarriage of justice would be perpetrated if the decision of the UNL Graduate Council is allowed to stand.

A decision by the Executive Graduate Council not to accept jurisdiction of an appeal shall be final and is not subject to further appeal.

1. Appeals to the Executive Graduate Council must be made in writing and must specifically outline the grounds for the appeal. Such appeal must be made within twenty (20) working days of the day the decision of the campus Graduate Council is received (working days shall not include those days the University is not in session).
2. The Executive Graduate Council must make a decision to hear the appeal or not to hear the appeal within thirty (30) working days after receipt of the appeal. Acceptance or denial of jurisdiction over the appeal will be made in writing.
3. The decision of the Executive Graduate Council on the merits of the case will be made and transmitted to the concerned parties within forty (40) working days after the decision to hear the appeal.
4. No person who was a member of the department or UNL Graduate Council involved in the case will be eligible to participate in the

## Appeal of Academic Action

A graduate student who is terminated from a program or is precluded from pursuing further graduate studies as a result of a decision rendered by the Dean for Graduate Studies may appeal that decision to the UNL Graduate Council, which will serve as the appeals board.





decisions of the Executive Graduate Council either to decide whether the case should be heard or to decide the merits of the case.

SOURCE: General appeal procedures established by the Executive Graduate Council (December 11, 1980; amended March 18, 1982)

SOURCE: Grounds for probation and termination established by the UNL Graduate Council (February 12, 1992; amended March 11, 2004)

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