Master’s Degrees: Naming and Curricula

The curricula and names for master’s degrees vary to suit a range of purposes and learning objectives. All curricula leading to master’s degrees must provide students with a substantial body of knowledge or ability beyond that gained through undergraduate programs and must require a minimum of 30 semester credits.

Professional master’s degrees prepare students for advanced career positions and do not disqualify a recipient from seeking a doctorate. The curricula for these degrees should comprise advanced courses in the practice of the discipline and may include courses to prepare the student for leadership, professional communication, and other topics. Research (699) and creative component (599) credits may not be used in the curricula of these degrees, which are named Master of *Discipline*.

Master of Science and Master of Arts degrees prepare students for careers that may involve research or creative scholarship. Some disciplines may consider these their highest academic degree, whereas others may consider these as a prerequisite for the doctorate. Degrees with these names require a research or creative experience or a learning experience related to research or creativity. When the experience culminates in a research or creative product, the curriculum includes thesis research (699) or creative component (599) courses through which the application of knowledge is overseen by faculty serving on students’ plan of study committees. Alternatively, a learning experience related to research or creativity may be integrated into at least one 500- or 600-level course other than 699 and 599. The course instructor does not need to be the student’s adviser, nor a member of the plan of study committee. To meet the learning objectives of such courses, students must engage in analytical thinking, synthesis of knowledge, originality, and learning how research (Master of Science programs) or creativity (Master of Arts) is practiced in the discipline.

Summary of requirements for master’s degrees

Master of *Discipline* (professional master’s degrees [no thesis, creative component, or learning experience related to research or creativity])

* Minimum of 30 total credits allowed by policy for use toward masters’ degrees
* No credits in 599 or 699 courses
* Faculty adviser required, other committee members optional

Master of Science/Arts (with thesis)

* Minimum of 30 total credits allowed by policy for use toward masters’ degrees
* Minimum of 3 credits of the 699 (research course) within the discipline
* Major professor and at least two additional plan of study committee members required

Master of Science/Arts (with creative component)

* Minimum of 30 total credits allowed by policy for use toward masters’ degrees
* Minimum of 2 credits of the 599 (creative component course) within the discipline
* Major professor and at least two additional plan of study committee members required

Master of Science/Arts (with learning experience in lieu of thesis/creative component)

* Minimum of 30 total credits allowed by policy for use toward masters’ degrees
* No credits from 599 or 699 courses
* Minimum of one 500- or 600-level, 3-credit course approved to provide the required learning experience related to research or creativity
* Faculty adviser required (other committee members optional)

Documentation of master’s degrees

The Office of the Registrar shall denote the specific type of master’s degree on university transcripts. Options are:

* “Master of *Discipline* without research or creative product”
* “Master of Science/Arts with Thesis”
* “Master of Science/Arts with Creative Component”
* “Master of Science/Arts without Thesis or Creative Component”

Students shall be advised to denote their degrees on the personal records of their credentials consistent with the transcript designation.

Theses and creative components must be deposited in the institutional repository in Parks Library. Learning experiences not culminating in theses or creative components are not shared through the institutional repository.