

## MS degree - course work only; feedback from Aer E

[REDACTED]

Wed 2/1/2023 2:14 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Dear Natalie,

We talked about this proposal at Aerospace Engineering department.

And here is our feedback.

Department is almost equally split between those who support it and those who do not.

Here are some comments and concerns from the faculty.

1. Some admitted PhD or master's students with assistantships will switch to master with no thesis.
2. CU Boulder has it, and it is MS, not M Eng. Moreover, students can take it remotely. I asked one of my current PhD students who received MS from CU Boulder remotely about one of the courses he took, and he said it was all asynchronous recorded lectures. I suggest that we look at other schools as well. My personal opinion on this is to offer a MS degree that is course work only. This is a good time for aerospace industry, which means more people are probably looking for such programs that can prepare them for the job market without need for the creative aspect of the degree. This is going to help our graduate program significantly.
3. I want to state this on the Degree Certificate. If it is left as an MS degree then it will send a wrong message to the Aerospace community.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

Department of Aerospace Engineering

[REDACTED]

## Department of Agronomy opinion on MS change

[REDACTED]

Tue 12/13/2022 4:38 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Hi Natalie: The Department of Agronomy discussed the change in MS policy, namely that coursework-only MS degrees be allowed. We are OK with the change, specifically, we are OK if the university allows coursework-only graduate degrees to have the label "MS." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Potential change in requirements for a Master of Science Degree from Iowa State

[REDACTED]

Mon 1/16/2023 12:36 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>; Haddad, Monica [C R P] <haddad@iastate.edu>; Mosher, Gretchen A [A&BE] <gamosher@iastate.edu>

Dear Drs. Robinson, Haddad and Mosher

I am adamantly opposed to awarding a "Master of Science" degree to a student who does not have a research or creative component to their program. If their program is coursework only, then they should not be awarded an MS degree. This approach would "cheapen" a traditional MS degree and mislead potential employers.

Respectfully

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Department of Animal Science  
Iowa State University

## Master of Science Proposal

[REDACTED]  
Mon 1/16/2023 12:40 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Cc: Haddad, Monica [C R P] <haddad@iastate.edu>; Mosher, Gretchen A [A&BE] <gamosher@iastate.edu>

Hi Natalie,

I was told to voice comments to you (if any), as you would be compiling them regarding the proposed non-thesis/creative component Master of Science change.

[REDACTED]

In short, it seems we are cheapening the Master of Science degree. How are my Master of Science students who perform research supposed to differentiate from those that are course based only? A student that has a Master of Science degree learns from research failures in the quest to deepening our knowledge about a subject area and understands study design. Doing thesis-based work, they understand the why and why not that cannot be learned simply by lecture. Simply putting their thesis title on a resume/CV will not be enough, as HR departments will have no distinction. Our very own campus HR has a hard enough time grasping reality of the workforce, I have no doubt they too would not be able to differentiate pay, experience, etc. in a course-based only MS program.

Thanks for gathering comments, hope this can be anonymous.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Iowa State University  
Department of Animal Science

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Master of Science Degree

[REDACTED]

Tue 1/17/2023 1:35 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Cc: Haddad, Monica [C R P] <haddad@iastate.edu>; Mosher, Gretchen A [A&BE] <gamosher@iastate.edu>

Hello.

I have been informed of a discussion occurring at the Graduate council concerning the conferring of a non-thesis, non-creative component Master's of Science degree.

I am STRONGLY NOT in favor of this. Students who participate in a creative component and write a thesis spend more time on their program and mastering the information at hand than those who simply take coursework. While I can appreciate that some majors may not lend themselves to having creative components, I still believe that students should be separated and identified based upon their work and depth of knowledge into their discipline.

Therefore, I am requesting that any non-thesis/creative component Master degrees be listed as Master of (discipline) and those with the thesis/creative component continue to receive the Master of Science.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Re: Master of Science (M.S.) degrees

Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Fri 1/20/2023 5:04 PM

[REDACTED] Haddad, Monica [C R P] <haddad@iastate.edu>; Mosher, Gretchen A [A&BE] <gamosher@iastate.edu>

Thank you for your feedback [REDACTED] We will share your comments with the Council.

Take care,  
Natalie

**Natalie B. Robinson** Assistant Director of Student & Faculty Services  
she/her/hers

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**W** grad-college.iastate.edu

I acknowledge that Iowa State University is a land-grant university located on the ancestral lands and territory of the Baxoje (bah-kho-dzhe), or loway Nation. [The United States removed the Meskwaki and Sauk nations from their land via the Treaty of 1842, and the Morrill Act of 1862 expropriated indigenous land to fund ISU.](#) I wish to recognize my obligation to this land and to the people who took care of it, as well as to the nearly 17,000 indigenous people who live in Iowa today. I'm working on my action plan, and you can, too, by following [Beyond Land Acknowledgement: A Guide](#).

[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 20, 2023 10:39 AM

**To:** Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>; Haddad, Monica [C R P] <haddad@iastate.edu>; Mosher, Gretchen A [A&BE] <gamosher@iastate.edu>

**Subject:** Master of Science (M.S.) degrees

Dear Natalie, Monica and Gretchen,

I am writing this e-mail regarding a proposal that is currently being considered by the University Graduate Council. The proposal relates to issuing Master of Science (M.S.) degrees to students who do a course-work only program. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] our faculty representative brought this proposal forth at our faculty retreat.

From the information shared, I believe currently at Iowa State, M.S. degrees are only awarded to students who complete courses and either 1) write a thesis or 2) do a creative component in addition to their courses. I also understand that ISU has a mechanism for students to do coursework only post BS/BA degrees, and these are called Master of (*Discipline name*), but are not awarded a M.S.

In my current role as a Graduate faculty mentor at ISU, and in my previous business role as the Director for Animal Welfare at the National Pork Board I have been pondering on this proposal.

I am *highly concerned* that this blanket M.S. degree will devalue the ISU-M.S. degree and fails to clearly delineate between the work load, training and skills garnered by the student for our stakeholders.

Speaking as an Animal Scientist, our graduate students are expected to either complete an in-depth creative component or a thesis that is based around basic- or applied research. We as faculty expect high scientific rigor of our students and produce high quality peer reviewed outcomes that are recognized globally.

We have been transparent and have clearly communicated to our stakeholders the scientific research training that our graduate students undergo, and frankly a M.S. degree only on coursework will not suffice. I hypothesize that this is going to place ISU students into very difficult professional and leadership situations and will disappoint and let down our stakeholders.

I think labelling all degrees as an M.S. is the wrong path to move down and I would be very concerned if the University moved to accept this proposal. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Department of Animal Science

[REDACTED]

RE: M.S. discussion

[REDACTED]

Wed 1/4/2023 11:19 AM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Natalie,

Happy new year and I hope you had a good break.

I am emailing to let you know the discussions our department has had on the Masters of Science. In general, Animal Science wants to keep the M.S. as is. We feel that without the thesis or creative component, the M.S. will be diluted in quality and this is a way to distinguish between the two types of masters degrees. The thesis or creative component give the student true science training. Otherwise, it is just a glorified B.S. degree. In our field, most employers value the experimental learning that is defined in a thesis. Course work only degrees should be distinguished like they currently are. Thus, no change is needed.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Department of Animal Science

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



## Commentary on Coursework Only Master of Science degree proposal.

[REDACTED]  
Wed 2/1/2023 1:22 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>;Haddad, Monica [C R P] <haddad@iastate.edu>  
[REDACTED]

I am writing to comment on the proposal that Master of Science degrees be awarded at Iowa State that do not involve research or a creative component - only class work.

I am very concerned about that development because as I understand it - if this goes through, students that do a research project or a creative component will have the same degree as students that do a coursework-only degree. I am concerned about the fact that there is apparently no easy way for employers and others outside department/University to know the difference. This matters because employers in numerous sectors want students that have real, hands-on experience in independently doing and/or evaluating research. Students that do a coursework only degree will not have that experience/expertise. I know that as it stands now, if approved, departments can choose to not offer coursework only Master of Science degrees - but I know it will only be a matter of time before college administration will pressure to offer more of these.

We have a mechanism in place to allow for an advanced degree that is coursework-only. It is the Master of (insert discipline). That should suffice.

Regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Faculty Senator- Animal Science  
[REDACTED]

Monica presented the proposal to allow coursework only Master of Science degrees at Iowa State University to the Faculty Senate on Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.

She asked for feedback. Here is what I documented:

- [REDACTED] (materials science and engineering): Asked the reason for the change. Monica did not directly answer his question but deferred a response until after more feedback was received
- [REDACTED] (psychology) added that some departments felt they could draw a larger pool of applicants with the ability to administer a coursework only M.S.
- [REDACTED] (natural resource ecology and management): M.S. has prestige and more rigor; after his informal discussion with the NREM faculty, his vote is “No”. Concerned about ability of students to sell themselves as having a M.S. from ISU when they have not completed the rigorous task of thesis research
- [REDACTED] (psychology) added that the Registrar’s office will be able to designate a coursework only M.S. on the transcript, with Workday Student
- [REDACTED] (political science): the need to have faculty manage a creative component creates an unsustainable workload for faculty in individual departments. Further, the proposal does not mandate that departments create coursework only M.S. degrees. Instead, it gives departments the autonomy to create them if they wish
- [REDACTED] (kinesiology): M.S. means something; employers and others may not look at the transcript, only the diploma (where there is no distinction). Coursework only M.S. degrades the quality of the M.S.
- [REDACTED] (geological and atmospheric science): How would assistantships be handled with online coursework only degrees. What would keep online students from demanding an assistantship, even if they were halfway across the world?
- [REDACTED] (electrical and computer engineering): What might be helpful is a list of other universities, with a lean toward those who are more prestigious, that have gone to online coursework only master’s degrees. This information could be informative to decision-making process
- Monica response: In our research, the majority of universities have no direct Graduate College policy that speaks directly to the point of coursework only master’s degrees. They talk only about master’s degrees from a more general sense
- [REDACTED] (electrical and computer engineering): This implies that other universities do not distinguish between master’s degrees
- [REDACTED] (English): Felt the coursework only master’s degrees would create inequity among graduate faculty. Given that faculty spend a good portion of time managing the planning, research, and writing of graduate students, this type of degree would eliminate a major workload issue for only faculty administered coursework only degrees

**I also received the following feedback last week from agricultural education and studies:**

From [REDACTED] Agricultural Education in CALS. I would ask you to consider favorably the option of course based Master of Science. Our Graduate faculty has been talking about a course-based Master of Arts (in Teaching) but an MS would be better. Five years ago, our program enrolled 87 active graduate students; now we have 37 due to Covid and other factors, but we will rebuild. Most are distance in our key long-term program. Agriculture has always been science-based, so the "S" is key to students and to employers. Students often take biophysical courses during their POS period of time. Our social science component is also "S."

We have few who take the thesis. The creative component is a problem. MOST of our students work on or two jobs. The professional job is in teaching agriculture or extension/outreach. They need the masters and take the distance program. The unstructured creative component is an issue in retention. Yes, we have tried several types of special courses for support but the outcomes are not there. A course-based program would increase retention and completion.

**Another piece of feedback came to me through Animal Science in mid-November:**

I am very concerned about that development because as I understand it - if this goes through, students that do a research project or a creative component will have the same degree as students that do a coursework-only degree. I am concerned about the fact that there is apparently no formal way for employers and others outside department/University to know the difference. This matters because some employers want students that have real, hands-on experience in independently doing and/or evaluating research. I know that as it stands now, if approved, departments can choose to not offer coursework only Master of Science degrees - but I know it will only be a matter of time before college administration will pressure to offer more of these course-work only Master of Science degree programs. This faculty member requested that the proposal be discussed at the Faculty Senate so that faculty could be more aware of the changes proposed.

## Coursework only Master of Science programs: Feedback

- MS should be limited to students who complete a thesis or creative component; Coursework only degrees should be a Master of “discipline”
- ALL master’s degrees should require a thesis or creative component, no exceptions
- I recommend against revising the current policy and not allow programs that offer course-work only Master degrees to use the label of “Master of Science” without a creative/research component. This would “add value” to degrees that have marginal value already, and take away value/dilute existing Master of Science degree. There are already two options available such as the Master in <discipline> degrees and professional Master degrees.
- At the graduate council level, I don't have a strong opinion on this. With each department, I think we should set our own expectations for creative components and in my mind, I don't have a problem them being a "master of science." I have a "M.S. of Engineering" from Purdue and I don't find that my job opportunities benefited or suffered. From the graduate council, I can appreciate that other programs would benefit from this for their students; therefore, I'm neutral on it.
- I don't have a strong opinion here. In my discipline the major of MS graduates go to industry. For the 50+ MS students I've graduated in the past 10 years, zero have gone to a job where their MS thesis topic was a requirement. The training and skills advancement helped them, but the thesis or scientific background was not a requirement. In my domain, our companies don't frankly know the difference between a Master of Science, Master of Engineering, Master of Technology, or any other version of a master's degree. I would be supportive of using the MS notation to simplify how we communicate and simply share that there are thesis and coursework options. It seems like this could get us down to 2 rather than 3 options as a creative component degree could simply be a coursework option where the creative component is a course the students take.
- Leave it as is
- I think our policy as is, is clear and traditional. I think some designation is needed between a professional, coursework only, terminal degree and a coursework plus thesis-based degree.
- I am not supportive naming a coursework-only master's degree Master of Science. The thesis is the key learning component of the MS, and by making MS include coursework only, that would devalue the MS degree.
- Could the creative component include a project? this could be scalable in hours (3-9 hours) based on the scope of the project. We had something like this at UNC Charlotte when I was there many years ago and it worked really well.
- I can see the logic in not awarding MS w/o a thesis or creative component. We award a Masters of Engineering instead of MS for coursework only, although we do require a creative component. There are other options for awarding coursework only degrees in other areas of study.

- Coursework only should not get Master of Science designation. This opinion is not based upon some fundamental principle, but because this is how the term MS is generally used and I don't see the benefit to allowing it to be muddled.
- My sense of the broader landscape is that nobody outside a pretty narrow lane within academia understands or cares about the distinction between Master of Science and Master of [Discipline]. So, I don't think it's worth holding onto the practice of prohibiting coursework-only degrees from being called Master of Science. Additionally, a creative component option adds enough additional faculty workload that (a) some people don't want to supervise one, and thus (b) creative component students may have to beg for "scraps" to find a reasonable creative component project and mentor, and this (c) limits the bandwidth for growing the coursework-only degree options that might otherwise add revenue as well as expand course opportunities for research-based graduate students if enrollment numbers were higher.
- While I am uncomfortable with coursework only programs that are called "Master of Science", I recognize that these programs have the potential to bring in a lot of revenue and provide additional flexibility in administering. If ISU pursues coursework-based Master of Science, I am supportive of a note on the transcript indicating that these are coursework-based degrees. I also think approval of the proposal would involve more discussion on the specifics of what and how many undergraduate courses are appropriate for a coursework only M.S.

## coursework MS feedback

[REDACTED]

Wed 12/14/2022 3:09 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Natalie,

Dr. Mellata shared with us that the Faculty Senate is discussing a proposal on offering a coursework masters of science/Arts degrees at ISU. I am in full support of this. I know the discussion focused on online enrollment but I think this move will also help recruit students seeking a more traditional graduate school experience. I also believe it will aid in attracting prospective students who intend to be practitioners and not researchers.

I understand a concern that has been expressed is that moving to a course only masters of science will degrade it's meaning and value. I find this concern to be elitist in thinking and is why graduate student enrollment is low throughout the country. How is taking more science-based courses in a science field any less intensive than taking 6-12 credits in research? We do a disservice to our professions and students when we start viewing some degrees as "less than" others that are equally challenging to the students completing the program.

Higher education is in jeopardy given current public opinion, limited grant funding, and limited faculty capacity. We must stop trying to work within an antiquated and elitist viewpoint of what academia is and start modernizing to meet current and future needs.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



RE: From Faculty senate meeting: Course Work Only Masters of Science/Arts Degrees

Winham, Donna [FS HN] <dwinham@iastate.edu>

Wed 12/14/2022 1:32 PM

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Sent: Wednesday, December 14, 2022 1:25 PM

Subject: RE: From Faculty senate meeting: Course Work Only Masters of Science/Arts Degrees

Here is my feedback about the proposal:

I'm not in favor of lowering quality standards for MS degrees earned at Iowa State. We currently have pathways for practice degrees – such as the Master in Professional Practice in Dietetics program. I would not be in favor of removing creative components or thesis requirements for MS degrees as that is an essential aspect of R01 research success and quality student preparation.

I am not as familiar with master of arts requirements, that might be a possible avenue to explore if a practice-based masters isn't preferred.

Thanks!

Food Science Human Nutrition / Iowa State University

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[fshnfacstaff-bounces@iastate.edu](mailto:fshnfacstaff-bounces@iastate.edu) <[fshnfacstaff-bounces@iastate.edu](mailto:fshnfacstaff-bounces@iastate.edu)> On Behalf Of Mellata, Melha [FS HN]

Sent: Wednesday, December 14, 2022 12:53 PM

To: H SCI FSHN Department Faculty & Staff <[fshnfacstaff@iastate.edu](mailto:fshnfacstaff@iastate.edu)>

Subject: From Faculty senate meeting: Course Work Only Masters of Science/Arts Degrees

Dear all

Just wanted to share this topic discussed at the Faculty Senate yesterday.

Monica Haddad, a member of Graduate Council presented a proposal on having a **coursework masters of science/Arts degrees at ISU**.

What ISU offers now are : MS science (with thesis) and Non thesis MS (with a creative compound).

According to them, having a coursework MS at ISU will increase online enrollment.

A senate raised concern about offering this kind of MS, as it will degrade the quality of what MS means.

If you have an opinion about this program, please share your feedback with **Natalie Robinson** (Grad college) by Feb 1<sup>st</sup>

Thanks  
Melha

\*\*\*\*\*

**Melha Mellata, Ph.D. (She/her/hers)**

Associate Professor of Molecular Microbiology

Courtesy Faculty, Veterinary Microbiology & Preventive Medicine

Chair, Interdepartmental Microbiology Graduate Program

Faculty Senator

Email: [mmellata@iastate.edu](mailto:mmellata@iastate.edu) | Phone: 515-294-9220 | Twitter: @Mellata\_Lab

Lab website : [Molecular Microbiology & Vaccinology Lab](#)

**Delivery Address:**

Iowa State University, 3346 Food Sciences Building

536 Farmhouse Lane Ames, IA 50011



## RE: Coursework Only Feedback

[REDACTED]  
Tue 1/24/2023 9:48 AM  
[REDACTED]

Making the FFP option a coursework only program would be wonderful. I fully support having this option.

[REDACTED]

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**Subject:** Re: Coursework Only Feedback

Thank you! We will provide this feedback to Council in our February meeting.

Take care,  
Natalie

Natalie B. Robinson *Assistant Director of Student & Faculty Services*  
she/her/hers

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I acknowledge that Iowa State University is a land-grant university located on the ancestral lands and territory of the Baxoje (bah-kho-dzhe), or Ioway Nation. [The United States removed the Meskwaki and Sauk nations from their land via the Treaty of 1842, and the Morrill Act of 1862 expropriated indigenous land to fund ISU.](#) I wish to recognize my obligation to this land and to the people who took care of it, as well as to the nearly 17,000 indigenous people who live in Iowa today. I'm working on my action plan, and you can, too, by following [Beyond Land Acknowledgement: A Guide](#).

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[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2023 4:54 PM  
**To:** Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <[nbr@iastate.edu](mailto:nbr@iastate.edu)>  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** FW: Coursework Only Feedback

Hi Natalie,  
Please see the information [REDACTED], in regards to the question about whether we should have a master's of science as coursework only. [REDACTED] laid out her support for this very well in the email below, so I figured I would just forward!

Ultimately, [REDACTED] support this change. I especially like that it's an option – to have a master's of science as coursework-only. I like that programs are not required to have coursework-only master's programs, but those programs that want it for a multitude of reasons, can have access to it.

Thank you for fielding all of this feedback from faculty and considering before the council makes a decision. I anticipate this will be one of the biggest faculty senate topics this semester.

[REDACTED]

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**Subject: Coursework Only Feedback**

I saw this again in Happenings today (<https://www.inside.iastate.edu/article/2022/12/15/senate>) about feedback related to a master's of science as coursework only.

To put this out there to you all, for the FCS students and in my opinion, they would be better served with a coursework only master's of science (MS). If an MS is not an option, going away from FCS and coursework only in Master's of FFP/Gerontology/Youth Development. I would argue all three programs have enough science and opportunities for application that would be reflected in a creative component without requiring the creative component.

Given the unique nature of Great Plains IDEA, the ISU programs have to work within the framework of the home university but also being mindful of why a student would choose xxx over yyy as their home university.

I never had a student be disappointed that we didn't have a thesis option. There could be an opportunity to substitute an exit interview for a final oral exam (FFP), final conversation about an internship (GERON or YTH), or other project (YTH or GERON).

From the article above

*Haddad asked senators to have their department's faculty respond by Feb. 1 by emailing feedback to Natalie Robinson, Graduate College student services assistant director.*

[nbr@iastate.edu](mailto:nbr@iastate.edu)

Attached are two documents I put together in Fall 2021 when we last discussed this topic, so information may have changed.

[REDACTED]

## RE: Coursework Only Feedback

Wed 1/25/2023 4:08 PM

To: Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

Hi Natalie,

As a college, we would appreciate the flexibility in designating coursework only programs as MS.

Best,

College of Human Sciences

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**From:** Robinson, Natalie B [G COL] <nbr@iastate.edu>

**Sent:** Monday, January 23, 2023 4:45 PM

**To:** Gillette, Meghan T [HD FS] <meghang@iastate.edu>

**Cc:** Mott, Katie [ADMIS] <kmott@iastate.edu>; Fox, Jonathan J [HD FS] <jjfox@iastate.edu>; Margrett, Jennifer [HS AD] <margrett@iastate.edu>

**Subject:** Re: Coursework Only Feedback

Thank you! We will provide this feedback to Council in our February meeting.

Take care,

Natalie

**Natalie B. Robinson** *Assistant Director of Student & Faculty Services*

*she/her/hers*

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**W** [grad-college.iastate.edu](http://grad-college.iastate.edu)

I acknowledge that Iowa State University is a land-grant university located on the ancestral lands and territory of the Baxoje (bah-kho-dzhe), or Ioway Nation. [The United States removed the Meskwaki and Sauk nations from their land via the Treaty of 1842, and the Morrill Act of 1862 expropriated indigenous land to fund ISU.](#) I wish to recognize my obligation to this land and to the people who took care of it, as well as to the nearly 17,000 indigenous people who live in Iowa today. I'm working on my action plan, and you can, too, by following [Beyond Land Acknowledgement: A Guide.](#)

## Feedback about master of science for coursework only

[REDACTED]

Programs wishing to offer a coursework-only graduate degree should be required to name Master of [Discipline] without the Master's of Science label. The "master only" is based solely on coursework completed. It does not require a thesis or dissertation that involves the student producing original data-based research. Each type of degree has merit. However, calling a coursework-only degree a "Master of Science" blurs the distinction between degrees that do and do not involve original data-based (scientific) research.

I agree with the current grad college policy that coursework only degrees should be Master of Discipline. I agree that Master of Science degrees should include a thesis/creative component. I just feel a Master of Science should include a research component to the degree. A Master of Science should be more rigorous than course work only.

Thank you for collecting this feedback!



RE: Commentary on Coursework Only Master of Science degree proposal.

Wed 2/1/2023 5:15 PM

I second you and share the same sentiment. We should not equate a course-work only degree with MS (thesis or creative component). Students with thesis, especially, get trained to conduct research and gain valuable skillsets such as writing a proposal, designing and implementing experiments, applying statistical methods, managing undergrads, data collection, interacting with growers, presenting at conferences, and much more.

I strongly support to keep MS and coursework only separate.

Department of Horticulture

I am writing to comment on the proposal that Master of Science degrees be awarded at Iowa State that do not involve research or a creative component - only class work.

I am very concerned about that development because as I understand it - if this goes through, students that do a research project or a creative component will have the same degree as students that do a coursework-only degree. I am concerned about the fact that there is apparently no easy way for employers and others outside department/University to know the difference. This matters because employers in numerous sectors want students that have real, hands-on experience in independently doing and/or evaluating research. Students that do a coursework only degree will not have that experience/expertise. I know that as it stands now, if approved, departments can choose to not offer coursework only Master of Science degrees - but I know it will only be a matter of time before college administration will pressure to offer more of these.

We have a mechanism in place to allow for an advanced degree that is coursework-only. It is the Master of (insert discipline). That should suffice.

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted] Animal Science

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

## FEEDBACK Master of Discipline vs Master Science -- coursework only

[REDACTED]

to: Natalie Robinson, Graduate Council (Asst. Dir. Student Services)  
cc: CoE Caucus.

Natalie,

You were given as the person collecting feedback for the Graduate Council.  
I have just queried my MSE Faculty and will forward a "collective feedback" when it received.

[REDACTED] I want to send my direct feedback [REDACTED].

### MY FEEDBACK:

**0.** If the people requesting this change CANNOT offer a sufficiently useful or articulate reason to do Master of Science Course-Work-Only, I see NO REASON to change it from the current "Masters of DISCIPLINE". (The single reason stated: People coming internationally for Masters of Science but sign up for Professional Masters with course-work-only are informed of the details, so it is a choice.)

1. The Professional Masters Degree (denoted "Masters of DISCIPLINE") already addresses the course-work-only issue, so there is no point to add a course-work-only Master of Science, which defeats the intent of MS degree. Notably, *as we try to innovate our education with more project-based learning, adding a degree with less active component is going backwards!*

2. The concern that the prestige of the MS degree would be diminished by not requiring a thesis or creative component is self-evident, by definition (also noted in #1).

3. The Masters of Science at ISU should retain its intended prestige indicating that the person did work reflecting their added effort in the producing a thesis or creative component.

So, I would reject this change, as I anticipate my faculty will also opine.

[REDACTED]

Department of Materials Science & Engineering  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Re: updates from Faculty Senate

[REDACTED]

I think it would be great for our students to have the option to do it without any creative component. I was a postdoc at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and they also awarded Masters without creative component or thesis.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

On Dec 13, 2022, at 4:30 PM, Zerbib, Shira [MATH] <zerbib@iastate.edu> wrote:

Dear all,

Here are a couple of items from the FS meeting today:

1. There has been a suggestion to add the option (throughout the university) to award a "Master of Science" without a creative component (today a master's degree with no creative component has the title "Master of [Discipline]" (e.g., Master of Mathematics) and not "Master of Science/Art" which may be considered more prestigious).

If this change is approved, it might be indicated in the transcript whether there was a creative component or not. Please send you feedback to Natalie Robinson: [nbr@iastate.edu](mailto:nbr@iastate.edu), or to me.

2. There was a first-reading proposal for some major policy changes in degree planning; please see the attached document: Policy Change: Degree Planning, and let me know if you have any questions or comments regarding this.

[REDACTED]