# Appendix - E: Professional Master’s Coursework Only Guidelines

**Current Policy:**

**(Guidelines passed Graduate Council April 16, 2009)**

Professional master’s programs are growing in demand nationwide in response, in part, to employers’ demands for students with more academic background in discipline-specific course work. Admissions requirements, credit limits, transfer policies, and time to degree requirements are the same as other master’s programs. Specific exceptions to regular master’s degree requirements are detailed below.

**E.1 Proposed General Features of the Professional Master’s Programs (coursework-only)**

These apply to new proposals for professional master’s programs. Existing professional master’s programs may be legacied in.

Name of the Program: The name of the degree must be clearly distinguishable from the Master of Science or Master of Arts degree. This means avoiding the word “science” or “arts” in the name of the degree. Exceptions may be appropriate for departments that wish to award a Master of Computer Science or Master of Animal Science degree.

Coursework: Minimum of 30 graduate credit hours of coursework. At least 22 graduate credits must be taken at ISU.  Research credits or creative component credits do not count toward the credit total because this is a coursework only degree.

*Note: This is the same credit requirement for a MS or MA degree. The difference is that there are no research credits.*

GPA Minimum: Same as for Master of Science or Master of Arts

Program of Study Committee: Directed by the DOGE or their graduate faculty designee. No committee requirement as this is a non-research/non-creative component option. However, individual programs/majors have the option of establishing a POS committee if they desire.

**Capstone Experience:** Not required

**External Oversight:** Any programs with accrediting bodies external to ISU would be subject to any requirements that are over and above the ISU minimum.

*Note: Students with minors and co-majors, in addition to a professional master’s degree, will have additional requirements and/or signatures. For more information, contact the Graduate College.*

# Appendix - E: Professional Master’s Coursework Only Guidelines

**Policy if M.S. coursework only approved today:**

**(Guidelines passed Graduate Council March 22, 2023)**

Professional master’s programs are growing in demand nationwide in response, in part, to employers’ demands for students with more academic background in discipline-specific course work. Admissions requirements, credit limits, transfer policies, and time to degree requirements are the same as other master’s programs. Specific exceptions to regular master’s degree requirements are detailed below.

**E.1 Proposed General Features of the Professional Master’s Programs (coursework-only)**

These apply to new proposals for professional master’s programs. Existing professional master’s programs may be legacied in.

~~Name of the Program: The name of the degree must be clearly distinguishable from the Master of Science or Master of Arts degree. This means avoiding the word “science” or “arts” in the name of the degree. Exceptions may be appropriate for departments that wish to award a Master of Computer Science or Master of Animal Science degree.~~

Coursework: Minimum of 30 graduate credit hours of coursework. At least 22 graduate credits must be taken at ISU.  Research credits or creative component credits do not count toward the credit total because this is a coursework only degree.

*Note: This is the same credit requirement for a thesis or creative component degree. The difference is that there are no research credits.*

GPA Minimum: Same as all other master’s programs

Program of Study Committee: Directed by the DOGE or their graduate faculty designee. No committee requirement as this is a non-research/non-creative component option. However, individual programs/majors have the option of establishing a POS committee if they desire.

**Capstone Experience:** Not required

**External Oversight:** Any programs with accrediting bodies external to ISU would be subject to any requirements that are over and above the ISU minimum.

*Note: Students with minors and co-majors, in addition to a professional master’s degree, will have additional requirements and/or signatures. For more information, contact the Graduate College.*

# Appendix - D: Master’s Programs at Iowa State University

The number of credits in a major for a master's degree will vary according to the degrees offered. General credit requirements for all master's degrees include:

* a minimum of 30 graduate credits is required for all master’s programs at ISU;
* at least 22 graduate credits must be earned at ISU;
* any transfer of graduate credits from another institution must be recommended in the program of study by the POS committee; and
* graduate credit earned as a graduate student will be approved for transfer only if a B grade or better was earned. A transcript must accompany the POS form.

**D.1 Master of Arts or Master of Science—Thesis**

At least 30 credits of acceptable graduate work must be completed, not less than 22 of which must be earned from ISU. Students are expected to research and write a thesis that demonstrates independent and creative work. A minimum of 3 semester credits is required for thesis research.

**D.2 Master of Arts or Master of Science—Nonthesis**

In certain programs a nonthesis degree program is offered. (For more information on requirements, contact the individual program or department.) This option requires the satisfactory completion of at least 30 graduate credit hours of acceptable work (not including research credit), not less than 22 of which must be earned from ISU, and satisfactory completion of a comprehensive final oral examination. In addition, every nonthesis master’s program must present substantial evidence of individual accomplishment (e.g., a special report, capstone course, integrated field experience, annotated bibliography, or other creative endeavor). A minimum of two semester hours of such independent work (referred to as the creative component) is required on every program of study for a nonthesis master’s degree and is applied toward the credit-hour requirement. This element of creative independent study must be explicitly identified on the program of study. Detailed requirements may vary with fields. Reference should be made to the program descriptions in the ISU Catalog.

**D.3 Master of Science—Coursework Only**

In certain programs a coursework only degree program is offered. (For more information on requirements, contact the individual program or department.) This option requires the satisfactory completion of at least 30 graduate credit hours of acceptable work (not including research credit), not less than 22 of which must be earned from ISU.