

# STANDARDS AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The general academic standards and degree requirements of The Graduate School described here apply to all students enrolled in degree and certificate programs. Some programs have additional requirements that are more detailed or tailored to the needs of the specific program. Students should acquaint themselves with all of the standards and requirements for their program, as specified in both this catalog and the relevant graduate program handbooks. Undergraduate and non-degree students taking a graduate course should consult the appropriate catalog for regulations that apply to them.

The advisory committee continually evaluates the student's performance. Any graduate student whose scholastic record does not meet the minimum requirements of the program and/or The Graduate School may be subject to dismissal.

## Grade Requirements

Maintenance of good academic standing in The Graduate School requires a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher at all times while enrolled in a graduate program. Whenever a student's cumulative average falls below 3.0, the student's performance is to be reviewed by the student's advisory committee to determine whether or not the student shall be permitted to continue graduate study. Conferral of a degree or certificate requires that the student have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for all courses listed on the final plan of study or advisement report.

The following grades are considered to be below the standard expected for graduate work:

- All "C" Grades, if directly within the student's field of study. A "C" grade (including a "C+" or "C-") may be considered acceptable if it is in a course in a supporting area that may be of benefit to the student and where the normal higher grade standard might discourage inclusion of that coursework in the student's program. Such work shall be identified on the plan of study.
- All "D" Grades. A course in which a student received a "D" grade may not be included (or remain) on the student's plan of study and the student's eligibility to continue in the degree program is reviewed by the student's advisory committee.
- Letters "F" and "U": These grades necessitate a recommendation by the advisory committee to The Graduate School as to whether or not the student shall be permitted to continue graduate study.

## Certificate Programs

A certificate from the University of Connecticut provides post-baccalaureate students with critical knowledge in a specific field or niche. A certificate is not a degree. Rather, it is a focused set of courses that, when completed, demonstrates competence in a coherent academic specialty. Students are awarded certificates based upon completion of a well-defined program of coursework. A certificate can be earned either as a "stand-alone" certificate (without simultaneous enrollment in a degree program) or while simultaneously pursuing a graduate degree.

The University of Connecticut offers several types of certificate programs: graduate certificates, post-master's/sixth year certificates, and post-baccalaureate certificates. Post-master's/sixth year certificates that require 30 or more credits for completion follow rules and requirements

that are similar to those of an equivalent master's degree (if one exists). Most other certificates require fewer than 30 credits (typically 12-15 credits). In a small number of cases where detailed justification has been provided, a certificate program may require as few as nine credits.

Graduate certificate programs consist entirely of graduate courses (those numbered 5000 or above). Post-baccalaureate certificate programs consist either entirely of undergraduate courses (those numbered 1000-4999) or of a mixture of undergraduate and graduate courses.

UConn's certificate programs may be offered face-to-face, entirely online, or in a blended/hybrid format. Information about certificates that involve a substantial online component is available through UConn Online ([online.uconn.edu](http://online.uconn.edu) (<http://online.uconn.edu>)). Detailed information concerning criteria and procedures may be obtained from certificate program coordinators.

A student may enroll in a certificate program on either a part-time or a full-time basis. If pursued on a full-time basis, many certificates can be completed in a single year. Students must complete the requirements for the certificate within three years of initial enrollment, or, for students who enroll in the certificate program while they are also pursuing a graduate degree at the University of Connecticut, within one year of either

1. the time the degree is awarded, or
2. the time allowed to complete that degree, if the student does not complete the degree within that timeframe.

In all cases, with the approval of the Executive Committee of The Graduate School, programs can specify shorter time limits for completion of certificate programs. All coursework on the plan of study for the certificate must be within these time limits.

To be awarded a certificate, a student must satisfactorily complete the required credits with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Advanced coursework taken as a non-degree student or an undergraduate at the University of Connecticut may account for up to six of the course credits required for completion of the certificate, provided the grades earned in such coursework are within the time limit for completion of the certificate program requirements. These credits can include up to six credits used to meet the student's undergraduate degree requirements, provided the courses are graduate-level courses required for that certificate program or the courses have been approved for credit sharing for that program by the Executive Committee of The Graduate School. Non-degree coursework may be included on the plan of study only with the consent of the advisor. Credits earned at other institutions may not be used on a certificate's plan of study. Post-master's/sixth year certificate students refer to the Use of Transfer Credits from Other Institutions section.

Admission to a certificate program does not guarantee admission to a related degree program. However, if a student earns a certificate and is currently pursuing or subsequently admitted to a related graduate degree program, all credits from the certificate may be counted toward the graduate degree, subject to the approval of the student's advisory committee in the degree program and the director of the certificate program. The terminal date associated with the degree will be determined using the date of the first certificate class as the initial date of enrollment for the degree. Students should contact graduate program coordinators to determine whether credits earned as part of a certificate program satisfy degree requirements of any particular degree program.

In addition, in certain cases where the appropriate programs have obtained specific prior approval, one three-credit course may be used

simultaneously to satisfy course requirements in two different certificate programs.

## Graduate Degree Programs: General Requirements

### Time Limits

Students are expected to register for coursework with reasonable regularity and to complete all requirements for the degree within a moderate span of time to assure continuity and adequate familiarity with developments in the field of study.

Ordinarily, if pursued on a full-time basis, the master's degree can be completed within two years. All work for the master's degree must be completed within six years from the beginning of the student's matriculation in the degree program. Work for a doctoral degree can ordinarily be completed within five years, and must be completed within eight years of the beginning of the student's matriculation. Failure to complete the work within the specified time limit or failure to maintain registration will require re-evaluation of the entire program and may result in a notice of termination.

An extension of the student's terminal date is considered only when there is substantial evidence that the student has made regular and consistent progress toward completion of program requirements. A detailed recommendation to extend the terminal date must be signed by the major advisor and submitted to the Dean of The Graduate School for approval no later than one month before the student's current terminal date.

### Plans of Study

To become a candidate for a graduate degree, the student must have a plan of study or advisement report that has been approved by their advisory committee or major advisor as appropriate for the degree program. Certain master's degree programs submit advisement reports for individual students at the conclusion of master's study rather than a plan of study. Advisement reports require the approval of the major advisor or program director. Successful completion (with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher) of all work indicated on the approved plan of study or advisement report is a fundamental prerequisite to the conferral of the degree. In addition, except when a waiver is explicitly granted by the Dean of The Graduate School, all coursework (including coursework taken prior to matriculation) that is included on a student's final plan of study must be within the above time limits.

Plans of study for master's and doctoral degree programs must be prepared and signed by the student and the members of the advisory committee. The advisory committee may require that the student take an exploratory examination to guide the committee in formulating the plan of study. Before drawing up and approving the plan of study, the major advisor should have on file and should consult for guidance a set of transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work the student has taken.

The plan of study shall consist largely of courses at the 5000 level or above. A limited number of credits at the 3000 or 4000 level (not more than six) may be included on a graduate degree plan of study. However, courses in the subject area UNIV cannot be used on a graduate plan of study.

In addition, the plan of study for a Plan A masters student must include nine credits of GRAD 5950 Master's Thesis Research or GRAD 5960 Full-Time Master's Research. Similarly, the plan of study for a Ph.D.

degree must include at least 15 credits and the Ed.D. degree must include at least nine credits of GRAD 6950 Doctoral Dissertation Research or GRAD 6960 Full-Time Doctoral Research. Note that course credit by examination is not allowed as a means of accumulating credits to meet the requirements for advanced degrees.

Approved plans of study for master's degree programs must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than the beginning of the student's final semester. Approved doctoral plans of study must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than when 18 credits of coursework have been completed. Failure to present the plan of study on time may prolong the period of study for the degree. Master's students may not take the final examination and doctoral students may not take the general examination before the plan of study has been approved. If an approved master's or doctoral plan of study has been submitted to the Office of the Registrar and a change is needed, an email outlining the changes and including the major advisor's approval should be sent to Degree Audit.

### Use of Undergraduate/Non-degree Credits and Credit Sharing

Except in the case of officially approved dual degree programs or as explicitly allowed herein, credits on the plan of study or advisement report cannot have not been applied toward any other degree, at the University of Connecticut or elsewhere (already completed or to be completed in the future), including undergraduate degrees.

However, up to 12 credits of advanced coursework taken while a student is either an undergraduate or a non-degree student at the University may be included on a master's or doctoral plan of study or advisement report, provided such coursework is within the time limit for completion of the degree requirements. Inclusion of non-degree coursework on the plan of study requires the consent of the advisory committee. These 12 credits can include graduate coursework used to meet the student's undergraduate degree requirements at the University of Connecticut, provided

1. the courses are required courses for the graduate degree program (i.e., they are not electives), or
2. the courses have been approved for credit sharing for that graduate degree program by the Executive Committee of The Graduate School.

Required courses include graduate courses that meet one of the following criteria:

1. the course is identified by course number as required of all students in the program,
2. the course is one of a limited number of courses (identified by course numbers) that can be used to meet a specific stated competency requirement for that program (e.g., a statistics requirement), or
3. for fields of study that fall entirely within a single academic department, the course satisfies a requirement that a student in that field of study take a specified number of credits of graduate coursework within that department.

### Use of Transfer Credits from Other Institutions

A limited number of credits (up to 25 percent of the total credits required for a master's degree program and up to 30 credits for a doctoral degree) of letter-graded graduate level academic work completed at other accredited institutions may be accepted in transfer and included on a plan of study provided the following conditions are met:

1. the major advisor indicates approval of the transfer of credit(s) by signing the plan of study and the *Transfer Credit Request form* as appropriate for the degree program;
2. the course is at a level appropriate for the student's graduate degree;
3. such coursework is within the time limit for completion of the degree requirements; and
4. the grade earned in the course is "B-" or higher.

In addition, any credits transferred to a graduate degree program at the University of Connecticut must not have been or be used toward a degree elsewhere (already completed or to be completed in the future).

Certificate students may not use courses completed at other institutions to satisfy requirements for a University of Connecticut certificate program. However post-master's/sixth year certificates that require 30 or more credits for completion follow the rules for transfer credits if there is an "equivalent master's degree." An equivalent master's degree is one that has the same name and substantially similar requirements as the post-master's/sixth year certificates.

Official transcripts of any coursework to be transferred must be on file with the University. Once the approved plan of study is submitted to the Office of the Registrar and official transcripts indicating satisfactory completion of the coursework to be transferred are received, the transfer of credit is noted on the student's permanent University of Connecticut academic record.

## Graduate Degree Programs: Master's Degrees

Master's degree programs are offered in a broad range of fields throughout the University. A master's degree program represents the equivalent of at least one year of full-time study beyond the baccalaureate level (or its equivalent).

More than one master's degree may not be awarded at this institution to an individual student unless the degree titles are different or unless the degrees are earned in substantially different fields of study.

### Thesis and Non-Thesis Master's Degrees

The Graduate School requires a minimum of 30 credits for a master's degree, though some programs may require more.

Master's degrees may be earned under either of two plans, as determined by the advisory committee. The Thesis plan (Plan A) emphasizes research activities while the Non-Thesis plan (Plan B) requires comprehensive understanding of a more general character. The Thesis plan requires no fewer than 21 credits of advanced coursework and no fewer than nine additional credits of master's level thesis research (GRAD 5950 Master's Thesis Research or GRAD 5960 Full-Time Master's Research), as well as the writing and oral defense of a thesis. The Non-Thesis plan requires no fewer than 30 credits of advanced coursework. In addition, some programs require a comprehensive final examination. Advisory committees may also require the student to take other courses with or without graduate credit, depending on the student's objectives and previous preparation.

Students admitted to study for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy may earn a Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in the same or another field of study, under either the Thesis (Plan A) or the Non-Thesis Plan (Plan B) option by meeting all of the requirements for that degree,

including filing a Master's Plan of Study for the degree that is based on courses that are not used on the student's Ph.D. Plan of Study.

Students may also apply for a Plan B master's degree in their Ph.D. field of study (if one is offered) if they meet all of the following requirements:

1. they have completed at least 30 credits of content coursework (i.e., any coursework other than GRAD 5950 Master's Thesis Research/GRAD 5960 Full-Time Master's Research or GRAD 6950 Doctoral Dissertation Research/GRAD 6960 Full-Time Doctoral Research) from a fully approved Ph.D. Plan of Study with no more than six credits being transfer credits from another university,
2. they have passed either a master's final examination or a doctoral General Exam in that field of study, and
3. they have been recommended by their major advisor or by the Dean of The Graduate School for award of the master's degree in that field of study. In this case, the courses used toward the master's degree can also be used on the student's Ph.D. Plan of Study.

### Master's Thesis

For students following a Thesis plan, the advisory committee must approve the topic and scope of the thesis and, upon its completion, ascertain that it represents an independent investigation of a significant topic and is an important contribution to ongoing research in the candidate's field. The thesis must be acceptable in literary style and organization. The advisory committee indicates its approval of the thesis and satisfactory oral defense by completing and signing the Report on the Final Examination form (see below).

The thesis must be dated as of the calendar year in which all requirements for the degree are completed. The Graduate School requires the electronic submission of the thesis through [uconn.submittable.com](https://uconn.submittable.com) (<https://uconn.submittable.com>), a University repository for public access. The final copy must meet all specifications outlined on the Office of the Registrar's website ([registrar.uconn.edu](http://registrar.uconn.edu) (<http://registrar.uconn.edu>)). It is the student's ultimate responsibility to be certain that the thesis conforms to the required specifications.

No restrictions that limit or delay the accessibility, use, or distribution of the results of a master's student's research are acceptable if such delays are inconsistent with an embargo period requested by the student or if they interfere with the timely completion of a student's academic program

### Master's Final Examination

Fields of study may require that candidates complete a final examination as part of a master's degree. If a final examination is required, it must be completed no later than one year after completion of coursework or the thesis. The student may not take the final examination before Regular Status has been granted. The examination must be completed by the published deadlines for the appropriate conferral period for the degree to be granted with that conferral date.

The contents of the final examination are under the jurisdiction of the advisory committee. The advisory committee has discretion to determine whether the examination shall be written, oral, or both. Invitation to participate in an oral examination is issued by the advisory committee, although other members of the faculty may attend. Under the Thesis plan, the examination may center on the candidate's research and its relation to the field of study as a whole, but may have a wider scope. Under the Non-Thesis plan, the examination shall be comprehensive and designed

to assess the candidate's mastery of the field and ability to integrate the knowledge acquired.

The decision as to whether a student has passed or failed the examination rests solely with the advisory committee, which shall take into account the opinions of other participating faculty members. The vote of the advisory committee must be unanimous. After the examination, the major advisor shall communicate the results to the student. In addition, the Report on the Final Examination, indicating the result of the examination and the names of all faculty members participating, must be signed by the members of the advisory committee and submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

If the student has failed the examination or if the advisory committee considers the result of the examination inconclusive, the committee has the option of requiring the student to retake it. In such cases, the recommendation must reach the Office of the Registrar promptly, and any re-examination must take place within 12 months from the date of the original examination.

## Graduate Degree Programs: Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree

The Ph.D. is the highest degree offered by the University. The program leading to its attainment is intended to give persons of outstanding ability the opportunity to become creative contributors in a scholarly field. Award of the degree testifies to broad mastery of an established subject area, acquisition of acceptable research skills, and a concentration of knowledge in a specific field. An individual may not earn more than one Ph.D. degree in a single field of study at this institution.

To earn a Ph.D., The Graduate School requires a minimum of at least 30 credits of content coursework beyond the baccalaureate (or its equivalent) or at least 15 credits of content coursework beyond the master's degree or other advanced degree in the same or a closely-related field of study (exclusive of any required Related Area). Content coursework is defined as any coursework other than GRAD 5950 Master's Thesis Research/GRAD 5960 Full-Time Master's Research and GRAD 6950 Doctoral Dissertation Research/GRAD 6960 Full-Time Doctoral Research. Ph.D. students must also take at least 15 credits of GRAD 6950 Doctoral Dissertation Research or GRAD 6960 Full-Time Doctoral Research. Some programs may also require Ph.D. students to fulfill a Foreign Language(s) or Related Area requirement.

Although certain minimum requirements are set by The Graduate School, it is important for students to realize that work toward this degree is not merely a matter of accumulating course credits or of satisfying other requirements.

The degree will be conferred only after the advisory committee has determined that the student has met the standard of independence of judgment and mature scholarship in the chosen field. The advisory committee has the flexibility to determine what is needed to meet this standard, provided

1. the standard meets the relevant minimum Graduate School requirements set forth in the Graduate Faculty Council by-laws and the program requirements set forth in the graduate catalog,
2. the standard is clearly articulated to the student prior to filing of the dissertation proposal, and
3. the standard is applied in an equitable and non-discriminatory way.

## Ph.D. General Examination

All Ph.D. students are required to pass a Ph.D. General Examination. A student is examined in the several facets of their field of study, not merely in the particular area of concentration. The examination may be written, oral, or both. Advisory or examining committees may give a series of cumulative examinations, to be taken at intervals over the student's period of study. For practical purposes, the final part of such a series shall be regarded as "the General Examination." The General Examination usually is undertaken when the student has completed at least 75 percent of the content coursework listed on the approved Plan of Study.

Normally, the General Examination is under the jurisdiction of the student's advisory committee. In this case, the final decision as to whether or not the student has passed the examination shall rest solely with the advisory committee. However, the members of the Graduate Faculty in a student's field of study can vote to assign authority to conduct and determine the outcome for all or part of the examination to a differently constituted examining committee. If a field of study has voted to assign authority over the General Examination to a different committee, the final decision as to whether or not the student passed the examination rests with that committee. In either case, a minimum of five faculty members must participate in the General Examination.

After the examination, the Report on the General Examination, indicating the result of the entire examination and the names of all faculty members participating, must be signed by the members of the advisory committee and submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than the date of the submission of the approved Dissertation Proposal.

## Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation Proposal is to be prepared in consultation with the members of the advisory committee before the research is well underway. When the Dissertation Proposal has been completed and signed by the student and also has been approved by the members of the advisory committee, the proposal then is submitted to the head of the student's department or program. The department or program head appoints reviewers from outside the advisory committee to conduct a critical evaluation of the Dissertation Proposal. The use of at least one reviewer from outside the University is encouraged. Reviewers may be appointed to evaluate an individual student's proposal, or they may be appointed to a committee responsible for reviewing all proposals in a particular field of study or group of related fields of study. The evaluation may take the form of a reading of the proposal or attendance at an oral presentation and discussion of the proposal.

Dissertation Proposals are reviewed with the following questions in mind:

1. Is the proposal well written, well organized, and well argued?
2. Does the proposal describe a project of appropriate scope?
3. Does the student demonstrate knowledge of the subject and an understanding of the proposed method of investigation?
4. Does the student show awareness of the relevant research by others?
5. Does the student consider how the proposed investigation, if successful, will contribute to knowledge?

The department or program head's signature on the proposal when the review is completed confirms that the student has passed the proposal defense. The Dissertation Proposal, bearing the signatures of the members of the student's advisory committee as well as the signature of the department or program head verifying satisfactory

review by two reviewers who are not members of the advisory committee (see the paragraph above), should be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by the time the student has completed the ninth credit of GRAD 6950 Doctoral Dissertation Research or GRAD 6960 Full-Time Doctoral Research. In any event, the approved Dissertation Proposal must be on file in the Office of the Registrar before the public announcement of the oral defense of the dissertation. Approved Dissertation Proposals submitted to the Office of the Registrar will not be considered in good order without the inclusion of any required copyright, Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), human stem cell approval granted by the Stem Cell Research Oversight (SCRO) Committee, or other required approvals. Receipt by the Office of the Registrar of the approved Dissertation Proposal and any required approvals are a basic requirement for eligibility to schedule the oral defense of the dissertation and for conferral of the doctoral degree.

specifications outlined on the Office of the Registrar's website. No restrictions that limit or delay the accessibility, use, or distribution of the results of a doctoral student's research are acceptable if such delays are inconsistent with an embargo period requested by the student or if they interfere with the timely completion of a student's academic program.

## Candidacy, Dissertation Preparation, and Final Oral Defense

Upon approval of the plan of study, passing the General Examination, and approval of the Dissertation Proposal, the student becomes a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

A dissertation representing a significant contribution to ongoing research in the candidate's field is a primary requirement for completion of the degree. The preparation of the dissertation is under the immediate and continuous supervision of the advisory committee, and it must meet all standards prescribed by the committee and by The Graduate School. It must be acceptable in literary style and organization. Although a dissertation should provide evidence of a student's ability to make significant research contributions in their field, it may contain work done in collaboration with others (including other students), provided the student has played a major role in the work and subject to the approval of the advisory committee. Proper acknowledgment of authorship should be included in the dissertation. Specifications for its preparation may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar's website. It is the student's ultimate responsibility to be certain that the dissertation conforms to the required specifications.

The oral defense of the dissertation must be announced publicly by means of the University's online Events Calendar at least two weeks prior to the date of the defense. Not fewer than five members of the faculty, including all members of the candidate's advisory committee, must participate in the final examination, unless written approval for a lesser number has been secured in advance from the Dean of The Graduate School.

The decision regarding whether a candidate has passed, conditionally passed, or failed the dissertation defense rests solely with the advisory committee, which will take into account the opinions of other participating faculty members and other experts. The vote of the advisory committee must be unanimous. Following the dissertation defense, the major advisor communicates the results to the student and verifies that the official report has been completed and signed for submission to the Office of the Registrar (or to the UConn Health Center, if appropriate).

The abstract and dissertation must be dated as of the calendar year in which all requirements for the degree are completed, including submission of the dissertation. All members of the student's advisory committee must approve the final version of the dissertation. The Graduate School requires the electronic submission of the dissertation through [uconn.submittable.com](http://uconn.submittable.com) (<http://uconn.submittable.com>), a University repository for public access. The final copy must meet all