Master Program Policies

The Master’s Degree involves an integrated program of study leading to the exploration of a specific topic of interest. A program of study merges the needs and aspirations of the graduate student with the expertise of faculty and the structure of a discipline. The course work and experiences used to satisfy the degree requirements of a particular program are held together by guiding principles or unifying themes and are grounded in a theoretical base articulated by program faculty. The College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services offers the following Master degree programs:

Division of Criminal Justice
- Criminal Justice
- Criminal Justice - Distance Learning
- Criminal Justice (with an Addiction Studies focus)

Division of Educational Studies and Leadership
- Educational Studies
- Educational Leadership
- Educational Leadership - Distance Learning

Division of Human Services
- Counseling (with a Mental Health focus)
- Counseling (with a School Counseling focus)
- Health Promotion and Education (with a Health and Exercise Management focus)
- Health Education
- Health Promotion and Education (with a Community Health Promotion focus)
- School Psychology

Division of Teacher Education
- Curriculum & Instruction (with a Specialization in Teaching and Learning of School Subjects focus)
- Curriculum & Instruction (with a Medical Education focus)
- Curriculum & Instruction (with a Specialization in Instructional Design and Technology focus)
- Curriculum & Instruction (with a Middle Childhood Education Focus)
- Curriculum & Instruction (with a Early Childhood Education Focus)
- Literacy (with a PreK-16 Reading Instruction focus)
- Literacy (with a Teaching English as a Second Language focus)
- Special Education

[*In this policies handbook, all master degree programs Ed.S., M.A., M.S., and M. Ed.) will be referred to as Master’s Degrees.]

Graduate students are subject to the most current university rules and regulations. Since changes do occur, official updates can be found by consulting the online Graduate Handbook at the Graduate School's website.

Some programs offer graduate certificate programs and endorsements. Please consult the individual programs for more information and guidelines. The policies and procedures that follow comply with the University of Cincinnati College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services Mission Statement. The policies and procedures stated herein are minimums established by the College. A division or program may require additional experiences or information deemed appropriate and necessary. It is the responsibility of the student to check with the division or program for additional policies and procedures.
**Sequence of Events for Master’s Degree**

Listed below are important stages that mark the progression through all programs leading to a Master’s Degree. The primary stages for completion of a Master program are as follows:

- **Admission**
- **Financial aid application**
- **Notification of acceptance**
- **Course of Study (Program planning)**
- **Time Restrictions and Requirements for Master’s Degree**

All master’s requirements must be completed no later than five years from the date of matriculation into the degree program for students beginning their program Autumn 2007 or thereafter. All master’s requirements must be completed no later than seven years from the date of matriculation for students beginning their programs prior to Autumn 2007.

- **Theses, Research Projects & Examinations**

The plan for the evaluation process must be accepted by the program as early as possible and definitely prior to the last full semester of work. Students are responsible for knowing their program's comprehensive exam dates and thesis and project delivery dates. The university dates for completion of these experiences must be adhered to in order to graduate in the semester requested.

- **Graduation**

The student must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit hour in each academic year from time of admission to graduation. In addition, the student must apply online to graduate with the graduate school by the announced date of the term graduation is anticipated. The online application can be found at [http://www.grad.uc.edu/graduation](http://www.grad.uc.edu/graduation). If the student registers and does not graduate she or he must reapply for graduation.

**Admission to the Master's Programs**

Students who wish to be admitted to a Master Degree program must meet all the minimum requirements established by the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services for admission. They also must follow the procedures closely as described in this document.

**Application Process**

An Application for Graduate Study must be completed and returned in accordance with the directions and must be accompanied by the appropriate application fee. The application for graduate study must be obtained and submitted online at [http://www.grad.uc.edu/](http://www.grad.uc.edu/).

The following documents must be submitted with the completed application:

1. Official transcripts showing all undergraduate and graduate course work completed, including degrees granted and dates of degrees. Applicants whose previous degrees were earned at the University of Cincinnati may substitute "on-campus" transcripts.
2. A statement of the applicant's short-term and long-term academic and professional goals.
3. A resume of relevant personal, professional, and educational data (For programs that require this).
4. Graduate Record Examination scores taken within the five-year period preceding admission. The verbal, quantitative and analytical writing sections of the Graduate Record
Exam are required. If future plans include a doctoral program, applicants are encouraged to take the appropriate Subject Test as required. Applicants are encouraged to consult individual programs for the appropriate advanced test. Information on the procedures for taking the Graduate Record Examination can be obtained from the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services Student Services Center.

5. At least three current letters of recommendation which address the applicant’s academic and/or professional background should be sent directly to the program.

**International student** applicants are required to provide specific information about their transcripts or degree programs to facilitate the applicant review process. **TOEFL / OEPT** The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the Oral English Proficiency (OEPT) are required of all applicants whose native language is not English. The College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services requires a score of 550 on the TOEFL (or 213 computer-based test or 80 internet-based test). Any specific program may require a higher TOEFL score. For program TOEFL requirements, refer to the appropriate program handbook. The College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services requires a score of 3 on the OEPT.

Some Programs may require additional application materials such as essays, personal interviews, or additional letters of recommendation. Contact the specific program for more information.

NOTE: It is the obligation of the applicant to adhere to all application deadlines and assure that the application file is complete. No action will be taken on incomplete files. Information on deadlines can be obtained from the office of the program to which the applicant is applying.

**Admissions Policy**

The College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services has adopted the following minimum requirements for admission into a Master Degree program:

1. The applicant must possess a Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.
2. The applicant must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.8 at the undergraduate level leading to the Bachelor Degree. All calculations are based on a 4.0 scale.
3. Candidates who graduated from a non-accredited college or university or who do not meet the minimum grade point averages requirement for admission may be admitted by a committee of faculty members from the program to which the candidate applied based upon an evaluation of evidence submitted by the candidate. As a minimum, the evidence must address mastery of the knowledge prerequisite to the courses required by the program, acceptable writing skills, the ability to engage in critical thinking, and a personal commitment to completing the Master program. The evidence must convincingly demonstrate the candidate’s potential for success in graduate level work.

Admission is by program. Specific criteria for admission are available from the office of the program to which the student is applying. Each program has established enrollment goals, which it may not exceed. Admission is offered only to the top ranked candidates in a number sufficient to meet enrollment limits; thus, not all students meeting minimum criteria may be admitted. Admission decisions may not be made on the basis of race, age, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation or handicap except in those disciplines in which the handicap will place the student, other students, faculty, or staff in physical danger.
Candidates who fail to meet the minimum requirements for admission into a Master's Degree program may not apply to the same program for at least one academic semester. During that period, such applicants may be encouraged by the program to enroll in appropriate course work to develop the knowledge, skills, and values deemed necessary for admission into the program, or to demonstrate that the applicant already possesses such qualifications. Whether such course work may apply to the Master degree program is left to the discretion of the program. Completion of this course work does not guarantee admission into the program.

**Notification**
Each program reviews the applicant's materials and informs the applicant of its decision after completing the review of the application. If the applicant is accepted, an advisor will be assigned. It will be the applicant's responsibility to set up an appointment with his/her advisor prior to the first registration for courses. Each accepted applicant is sent a letter informing him/her of the program's decision. Accepted applicants must notify the program in writing of their intent to enroll. If the application is not accepted, the program will notify the applicant by letter of this decision.

**International Students, General Information**
The University of Cincinnati maintains an International Student Services Office (ISSO), which serves international students attending the University. The ISSO publishes A Handbook for New International Students ([http://www.isso.uc.edu/forms/pdf/Int_handbook.pdf](http://www.isso.uc.edu/forms/pdf/Int_handbook.pdf)), Information for International Student Applicants for the University of Cincinnati, and The Advisor to assist new international students. These are available at the ISSO office. International students should also consult their program guidelines and refer to the College policies.

**International Students, Maintaining Immigration Status**
International students must maintain full-time enrollment of 12 credit hours per semester, for two consecutive semesters each academic year in order to maintain their visa status as a full-time matriculated graduate student. (Students who need accommodations because of physical or learning associated conditions should contact their individual program for guidance.)

**Allowable Transfer Credits**
Acceptance of credits for transfer is based on demonstration of competency, as defined by the admitting program, and on their acceptability to the student's planned program. The number of transferable and acceptable credits is determined by the faculty in the program to which students have applied. Eligibility for graduation requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits, at least 50% of which must be completed while in residence at the University of Cincinnati. Many programs require more credits for the degree, and students should confer with their individual programs to ascertain program requirements. In no case may the final 50% of a University of Cincinnati’s program requirements be satisfied by transfer from another institution.
Changing to Another Degree Program at UC

Students are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the given degree program in which they are registered. In order to change from one degree program to another, a student must submit a complete application to the new program. If the degrees are housed in the same department, and the change is made over consecutive semester enrollments, the application fee is waived. If the new degree program is in a different administrative program, the student is responsible for paying the application fee. A student cannot graduate from a program that is different from the one into which they are officially accepted and in which university records show them to be matriculated. A program can accept up to 50% of the graduate credits required for the master’s degree into the program to which the student is transferring from the graduate program at the University of Cincinnati from which the student is transferring. The maximum number of credits that a student can transfer from unclassified (or undeclared major) status at University of Cincinnati to a specific degree program is 10. If students must take undergraduate courses to satisfy prerequisites, the student may be accepted by the program on a provisional basis contingent on satisfying those prerequisites. In all of these cases, the program should indicate on the Transfer of University of Cincinnati Credit Form which transfer credits are accepted. These procedures ensure the student will be successfully transferred into the new program and the integrity of student records will be maintained.

Financial Support

Programs actively assist students in obtaining financial aid. Applications for financial aid are required every academic year. Separate applications are required for summer sessions. Information about types of awards is available through individual programs and is printed in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Humans Services Bulletin. Information is also in the Graduate School Handbook, and on the website: www.grad.uc.edu. Financial assistance is limited to the availability of funds and may be contingent upon GPA, as well as other criteria established by the program.

Students are encouraged to apply for financial aid (work-study and loan) consideration as soon as possible after January 1 because funding in some programs is limited and awarded on a first-come first-served basis. To apply, a student completes a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) available via the "apply for aid" link at Student Financial Aid.

Maintaining Graduate Student Status

Minimum Credits/Registration Requirements

In accordance with University policy, students must be registered for 1 graduate credit, preferably in the Autumn Semester, to be considered as a graduate student throughout the entire academic year, Autumn through Summer. Failure to register during any academic year will result in termination of graduate student status. Reinstatement is only possible through program action following established University policies, which involves completion of the Reinstatement Request form. This form can be found on the Graduate Student Forms (http://www.grad.uc.edu/forms.aspx) page and is listed under Reinstatement Request.

The summer session consists either of one full semesters of work, or work taken during three consecutive summer mini terms. In accordance with University policy, six summer mini terms is regarded as equivalent to one academic year. Students are not permitted to register for more than
6 credit hours for any single summer mini term (18 credit hours maximum for the entire summer semester).

**Minimum Academic Performance**

According to the University policy, students must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average upon completion of the course work leading to a Master degree. Each student's progress will be monitored during the course of the program. If a student's cumulative average falls below 3.0 at any of these points in his/her program, the student will be notified by the program and placed on academic probation. If a student remains on academic probation for three consecutive monitoring periods, he/she will automatically be terminated from the program.

**Time Restrictions**

A master's student must complete all requirements in his or her master's program no later than five years from the date of matriculation into the degree program for students beginning their program Autumn 2007 or thereafter. All master's requirements must be completed no later than seven years from the date of matriculation for students beginning their programs prior to Autumn 2007.

**Extensions of Time to Degree**

Under extenuating circumstances, students may petition the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, through their program office, for extension of the time limit for attaining their degree prior to expiration. To apply for an extension, the student must download a Graduate Petition for Reinstatement and/or Extension Form (http://www.grad.uc.edu/file_PDF/RevisedRandEGraduatePetition.pdf) and submit the completed form (signed by his or her adviser) to the graduate program director. The form must include:

- a projected timeline for program completion,
- a reason for the delay,
- signatures of the student, student’s graduate program director, college dean and adviser.

The form is forwarded to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School who will approve or deny the petition and notify the student in writing.

**Reinstatements**

Students who have not been registered for at least one graduate credit hour that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) in an academic year are considered inactive. To regain active student status, students may petition the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, through their program, for reinstatement. Reinstatements are available to students who have been inactive for up to three years. To apply for a reinstatement, the student must download a Graduate Petition for Reinstatement and/or Extension Form (http://www.grad.uc.edu/file_PDF/RevisedRandEGraduatePetition.pdf) and submit the completed form to his or her graduate program director. The form must include a timeline for program completion, a reason for delay, signatures of the student's program director and college dean, and the student's signature. If reinstatement is approved, the student must pay a reinstatement fee equal to the current tuition for one graduate credit for each of the unregistered years up to a maximum of three credits.

**Readmission**
Students who have been inactive (not enrolled in their program) in classes for more than three years are not eligible for reinstatement and must reapply for readmission to the University.

Readmission does not change the student's original entry date. Time to degree will be calculated from his or her first entry date. To apply for readmission, the student must submit a completed Readmission Form (http://www.grad.uc.edu/file_pdf/reapplication.pdf) with the processing fee to his or her program director.

**Leave of Absence**

If you wish to apply for a leave of absence, you must complete the Request for Leave of Absence Form (http://www.grad.uc.edu/file_pdf/leaveofabsence_form.pdf) and submit it to your program director, along with the appropriate documentation explaining the reason for your leave.

**Course of Study**

After admission to a specific master's degree program, the student is required to design a course of study with a program advisor that is cohesive rather than a collection of courses. The plan must meet guidelines specific to the student's program, and include a culminating experience (thesis, project, portfolio and/or examination). The student shall plan a program of study, in collaboration with an assigned advisor. This plan must be filed with the program and placed into the student's file. This plan must address: 1) how the student plans to meet the minimal number of credit hours required for the Master Degree and 2) how the student plans to meet the program requirements required by the specific program. Any changes in the plan must be approved by the student's advisor and placed on file in the student's program office.

**Credit Hour Requirements**

The University of Cincinnati is on a semester system. While qualification for the master's degree is not based exclusively upon the completion of a definite number of hours of course work, the satisfactorily completed graduate work must consist of a minimum of one academic year of full-time graduate study consisting of at least 30 graduate semester credit hours, including any thesis or research project.

Semester credit hour requirements for master's degree programs vary by program. Therefore, some master's programs are completed in one year whereas other programs require two or three years. At least 20 of the graduate semester credit hours applied toward a master's degree must be derived from formal course work, i.e., any course taken for graduate credit for which the graduate student receives a letter grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, or F.

Students enrolled in full-time graduate study must register for a minimum of ten graduate credit hours per semester. Students receiving scholarships must register for the number of graduate credit hours each semester for which they are funded (see Costs & Funding link on Graduate School's website). Students receiving assistantships or fellowships from the university must register for a minimum of 12 credit hours for each semester they are funded.

**Theses, Research Projects, & Examinations**

No Master's degree is granted for merely accumulating credit hours. A final experience, referred to in the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services as the Culminating Experience, is required. A Culminating Experience is defined as satisfactory demonstration of mastery of the knowledge and skills required as specified by the individual program and by the College. The Culminating Experience should be a well-defined plan for the student to display those competencies attained through his/her program of study. It is recommended that a description of
the culminating experience be presented with the student's course of study. The final plan for the culminating experience must be accepted by the student's advisor and committee, where appropriate, as early in the program as is feasible, but certainly prior to the last full semester of work. Each Culminating Experience is an individualized evaluation of the student that is monitored and documented by at least two faculty members, at least one of whom is from the student's program area.

The College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services recognizes three options for the Culminating Experience: a) a written comprehensive examination, b) a Master's project/portfolio, or c) a Master's thesis. Some programs may require that a student satisfactorily complete two of these three options. These options may vary slightly from program to program, and students should consult program handbooks and/or advisors for specific requirements.

A Master's project/portfolio is an investigation, a demonstration project or professional developmental activity.

A Master's thesis is a research investigation which has applicability beyond the immediate setting in which it was conducted. All theses developed and produced by students at the University of Cincinnati must be made accessible to the public through publication.

If a Master's project or thesis proposal involves a study on human subjects, the candidate must secure approval from the University Institutional Review Board, before he or she can initiate the study. Further information about IRB requirements are found at (http://researchcompliance.uc.edu/).

**Comprehensive Examination (No credit)**

In some programs, the final evaluation may be done in the form of a comprehensive exam, a professional portfolio or research project. The specific nature of the final evaluation is determined by the academic unit offering the Master degree program. If questioned, the appropriateness of a final evaluation will be decided by the University Graduate Council.

The College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services has dates established each semester for Master's comprehensive examinations. Programs may elect to offer examinations on these dates or on other dates.

For programs that allow students to complete their examinations on the date established by the college, the program must submit, at least one week prior to the established date, an examination packet for each student taking the examination to the appropriate College office. The examination must include the questions for each section (morning and afternoon) in exactly the form in which they are to be administered to the student. For students electing to complete their examinations on a date other than one established by the college, it will be the program's responsibility to arrange for an appropriate location and proctoring for the examination. In addition, it will be the program's responsibility to have the examination packet available for the student on the date and time agreed upon by the advisor and student.

Unless specified, all belongings, notes, purses, etc., must be left in the front of the room. The only materials to be at the student's seat are the examination packet, pens, pencils, and answer books. There will be dictionaries, calculators, and pencils available, if necessary. At the discretion of the program, comprehensive examinations by computer may be approved. However, appropriate supervision of the computer-based comprehensive examination must be assured by the program.
Students failing the examination are entitled to one reexamination. The procedures for the administration of this reexamination will be the same as those for all comprehensive examinations. If a student fails this second examination, his or her candidacy for the Master’s degree is terminated.

**Master’s Project**

Students may register for a maximum of 4 graduate credits for this option. In preparing for a Master’s project, the advisor and student should have an initial discussion to determine the general parameters of the project and develop a tentative calendar for its completion and the format of the proposal. Once these have been decided, the student prepares a written proposal for the project and presents it to the advisor for review and discussion. Upon completion of the proposal, the student, with the aid of the advisor, selects a Master project committee to provide guidance for the project. The committee should be comprised of at least two faculty members, at least one of whom is from the student's program. The committee may hold a formal hearing to review the proposal. It will be the student's responsibility, with assistance from the advisor, to arrange for an appropriate time and place for this meeting. This hearing must be held and the proposal accepted no later than the semester before that in which the degree is to be awarded. The committee's decision on the proposal, including all modifications, will be reported in writing and a copy of this decision will be placed in the student’s program file. Following this review, the proposal is subject to review by the Internal Review Board. The student should contact the program coordinator for the guidelines and policies governing such a review. A report of this review must be filed in the student’s program file. No project may be undertaken until such approval has been received and so recorded. As the student completes the project, the student should keep the committee apprised of his or her progress and request guidance as needed. The project must result in some document of record. The usual form of this document is a written report. For those projects such as computer programs, slide-tape presentations, or other media, the committee will determine the type of written documentation that is to be submitted upon completion of the project. At the conclusion of the project, the student will present a draft of the project report, with accompanying supportive data when appropriate, to the committee members for review and suggestion. The draft should be revised in accordance with these suggestions until it is acceptable to the committee. Once an acceptable document has been generated, the student, with the support of his or her advisor, must schedule a final hearing for the presentation of the project to the committee. The committee will report its decision on the acceptability of the project in writing. A copy of this report must be filed in the student’s program file. The student should make necessary corrections to the final document. A copy of the written documentation, along with all appropriate aspects of the project, must be submitted to the student’s program. The written portion of the project should be placed in the student’s file; it is the program’s responsibility to appropriately house the remainder of the project. As a matter of courtesy, committee members, especially the chairperson, should be provided with a copy of the project, especially the written documentation portion.

**Master’s Thesis**

Students may register for a maximum of 6 graduate credits for this option.
In preparing for a Master’s thesis, the advisor and student should have an initial discussion to determine the general parameters of the thesis and develop a tentative calendar for its completion and the format of the proposal. After these have been decided, the student prepares a written proposal for the thesis and presents it to the advisor for review and discussion. As a minimum, the proposal should consist of: a) a statement of the problem, b) some justification for studying the problem including relevant literature, c) the research questions motivating the research, and d) the procedures to be employed to complete the research project.

Upon completion of the proposal, the student, with the aid of the advisor, selects a Master thesis committee to provide guidance for the project. The committee should be comprised of at least two faculty members, at least one of whom is from the student's program.

The committee may hold a hearing to review the proposal. It will be the student's responsibility, with assistance from the advisor, to arrange for an appropriate time and place for this meeting. This hearing must be held and the proposal accepted no later than the semester before that in which the degree is to be awarded. The committee's decision on the proposal, including all modifications, will be reported in writing and a copy of this decision will be placed in the student's program file.

Following this review, the proposal is subject to review by the Internal Review Board. The student should contact the program coordinator for the guidelines and policies governing such a review. A report of this review must be filed in the student's program file. No thesis research may be undertaken until such approval has been received and so recorded.

As the student nears the completion of the thesis, he/she should keep the committee apprised of the progress and request guidance as needed. The thesis option must result in a written document. When preparing this document, students must follow the most current detailed instructions on the Graduate School’s website. At the conclusion of the research; the student should present a draft of the thesis to all committee members for review and suggestions. The draft should be revised in accordance with these suggestions until it is acceptable to the committee.

Once an acceptable document has been generated, the student, with the support of his or her advisor, must schedule a final hearing for the presentation of the thesis to the committee. The Graduate School has established dates by which a thesis must be defended in order to graduate in a particular semester. It is the student's responsibility to determine that date and schedule his or her thesis hearing in accordance with that date. The committee will report its decision on the acceptability of the thesis in writing. A copy of this report must be filed in the student's program file. If the student has successfully defended his/her thesis, the committee must sign two face sheets (original Committee Approval Forms). It is the student's responsibility to complete the remainder of the face sheet, which should be done using a typewriter, or computer generated print. The student must submit his or her thesis by following the most current detailed instructions on the Graduate School’s website (www.grad.uc.edu). The student must adhere to the last date for submission of finished thesis established by the Graduate School. As a matter of courtesy, committee members, especially the chairperson, should be provided with a copy of the thesis.

**Graduation**

The University of Cincinnati graduates students each semester including summer semester. There are, however, only two formal graduation ceremonies, which are held at the end of Fall and Spring Semesters.
Two semesters prior to the semester in which a student anticipates graduation, the student should confer with the program office staff and consult the graduation page of the graduate school website (http://www.grad.uc.edu/graduation.aspx) to ascertain the application deadline date.

**Application to Graduate**
Students must request their graduation information by registering their intent to graduate on the graduation page of the graduate school website (http://www.grad.uc.edu/graduation.aspx). The student must complete all portions of the application and any necessary forms. The student must complete all requirements by the specified time lines in the semester he or she has applied to graduate. Otherwise, a new application for graduation must be filed.

**Graduation Requirements**
Before a student can graduate, he or she must meet the following requirements:

1. The student must be registered for at least one graduation credit in their program in an academic year, after having met minimum degree course/candidacy requirements to be considered a graduate student throughout the academic year.
2. Submission of Notification of Removal of all NG, N, I, UP, SP and F grades.
   - Confirmation of change of any 'N' grades; satisfactory grades are also necessary in the graduation semester.
   - Confirmation of satisfactory completion or waiver of required courses in which an 'F' was originally received.
   - Confirmation of completion of work and changes of 'I' grades.
3. Posting of all satisfactory grades for the graduation semester.
4. Satisfactory completion of all applicable College and program requirements is provided by the major advisor filling out the Checklist for Completion of College/Departmental Requirements for Graduation and sending it to the Graduate School (form available in the program office).
Approved by the CECH at the all-college faculty meeting 2/28/08