Graduate Degree Requirements

The following scholastic requirements are those of the Graduate School. Individual colleges and/or departments may list additional requirements.

1. Overall grade point average must be B (3.000) or better on all graduate credit hours at UAH. In addition, the grade point average must be B (3.000) or better on courses taken in the current graduate degree program;
2. No grade of D or F may be counted toward a graduate degree;
3. At least 30 percent of the hours required for a graduate degree must be completed in courses numbered 600 or above;
4. A majority of the credit hours (including dissertation credits) toward a doctoral degree must have been earned at UAH (or, in the case of joint/shared programs, at the participating institutions).
5. In the case of joint/shared programs, at least 33 percent of all hours earned for a degree must be earned at UAH.

The Master's Degree as First Graduate Degree

Students may follow one of two plans for the master's degree, except where modified by individual departments. Students should submit a Program of Study (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) with the help of an academic advisor before the completion of 18 semester hours of graduate coursework, in order to ensure that courses taken will apply to the degree.

Thesis Plan

Degree requirements under this plan include completion of at least 24 semester credit hours of graduate coursework and at least six thesis credit hours of graduate coursework (699) toward the writing of an acceptable thesis. Students working on a thesis must register for thesis credit each semester in which they receive supervision or during which they are engaged in the formal preparation and/or defense of the thesis. The thesis should show evidence of the student's capability for research, independent thought, and analysis. Furthermore, the thesis should be written in fluent, acceptable English. The subject must be in the major field. All theses must be accessible to the general public.

Master's thesis supervisory committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the department or program, with approval of the Graduate Dean, and must be composed of at least three members. Committee members shall all have been approved as graduate faculty, with at least half being full members of the graduate faculty and at least half being from the major department/program. The Committee Chair, who oversees the thesis process, must be a full-time UAH graduate faculty member. If the Research Advisor, who oversees the research project, is not a full member of the UAH graduate faculty, then there must be a separate Committee Chair.

A completed copy of the thesis must be submitted to the major department and the thesis defended according to the dates set by the Graduate School, typically at least eight weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. The specific dates and detailed procedures for submission of theses can be found on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/). After the student has passed their thesis defense, a copy of the thesis signature page signed by the committee members, Department Chair, and College Dean must be submitted to the Graduate School for final copyediting and approval by the Graduate Dean. Theses must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School's Thesis, Dissertation, and DNP Project Manual. Students must be in good academic standing (3.000 or better) to schedule a thesis defense.

In exceptional cases, theses may be written in absentia. Before leaving the University, students must 1) select a thesis subject, 2) submit to the major Department Chair a satisfactory outline of the thesis, and 3) submit satisfactory evidence that adequate facilities are available where research is to be done. The student's Committee Chair, the Department Chair, and the Graduate Dean must then approve such a plan.

Non-Thesis Plan

Degree requirements for the master's degree under this plan include the completion of a minimum of 30 semester credit hours of graduate coursework. Individual colleges and/or departments may have specific or additional requirements. A thesis is not required; however, a candidate working under this option may be required to participate successfully in a seminar or other courses for acquaintance with research methods and appreciation of the place and function of original investigation in the field. Credit hours in 699 do not count as acceptable coursework toward a non-thesis plan.

Transfer Credit

With permission from the major department, students may transfer up to 12 semester hours of acceptable graduate credit from an incomplete degree program earned at an approved institution and may count it toward a master's degree. No transferred credit may be more than 10 years old at the time of a student's graduation from UAH. Such credit may be transferred with the approval of the major department if completed with a grade of B or better.

In some circumstances, a student may need to take a graduate course at another institution while enrolled in a UAH degree program. The transfer of such credit back to UAH must be approved by the department and by the Graduate Dean prior to the student enrolling at the other institution. (This does not apply to joint/shared programs with other institutions).

Time Limit

The degree must be earned within 10 years or by the end of the 30th semester. There are three semesters a year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. The time clock starts when the first course is taken (including transfer credit).
Application for Degree
All candidates for a master’s degree must apply for the degree by submitting the Application for Graduate Degree (https://www.uah.edu/registrar/commencement/apply-to-graduate/) and fee to the Registrar’s Office at least three months before the degree is to be conferred. Consult the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/) for specific deadline dates.

Final Examination/Degree Completion
Candidates for a non-thesis master’s degree may be required to take a final comprehensive examination or attain satisfactory performance (B or better) in a capstone course. Capstone courses must be designated as such by the department/program during the course approval process and be approved by the College Dean, the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost. Final examinations for non-thesis candidates may be written, oral, or both.

Thesis option candidates must pass a final examination that includes an oral presentation of the thesis in the form of a seminar before the student's supervisory committee; the oral presentation is open to the members of the University community. Immediately following the oral presentation, the candidate will be examined by the committee in a closed meeting. The examination must be given within the semester in which degree requirements are to be completed, according to the dates set by the Graduate School. The results must be reported to the Graduate Dean within two working days. A written notice of the time and place of the examination must be sent to the Graduate Dean at least two weeks before the examination date. The Graduate Dean may appoint an additional member of the graduate faculty to act as an observer for each thesis defense. Once set, the examination becomes an official Graduate School matter; the date cannot be changed without prior arrangement among the supervisory committee members and the student, and without approval of the Graduate Dean.

After approval by the Graduate Dean, the department must send a copy of the written notice to the candidate and each member of the supervisory committee. A student may take the final examination no more than twice.

Thesis Submission
After the student has passed their thesis defense, and before the published deadline on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/), the thesis signature form (with supervisory committee, Department/Program Chair, and College Dean signatures) must be submitted to the Graduate School. Once the signature form is received, the Graduate School will contact the student with directions for creating an account in ProQuest. The student will upload the final thesis draft to ProQuest by the posted deadline on the Graduate School website and will then work with the UAH copyeditor to finalize the manuscript. All copyedits must be finished by the Registrar’s deadline before the published graduation date, or the student will not graduate in that semester. Theses must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School's (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/) Thesis, Dissertation, and DNP Project Manual. Upon completion of the copyediting process and the Graduate School’s acceptance of a student’s thesis, the Graduate Dean will sign the thesis signature form. All theses must be accessible to the general public. Detailed procedures for submission can be found on the Graduate School website. (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/) For specific questions call (256) 824-6055.

Late Submission
Students who miss the published deadlines but submit all required documents to the Graduate School by the end of the current semester will not graduate in the current semester; instead they will fall under the thesis deadlines of the subsequent semester. These students qualify for a 0-credit-hour option the subsequent semester if the 0-credit-hour option is offered by their departments. Students may only take the 0-credit-hour option once and must consult with their Committee Chairs in order to register for the 0-credit-hour option. All copyediting in ProQuest must be completed by the Registrar's deadline at least one week prior to the published graduation date in the semester during which the student plans to graduate.

Second Master’s Degree
A student is permitted to apply no more than six semester hours of credit earned for one completed graduate degree toward an additional master's degree. Such permission is granted at the discretion of the major department and approved by the Graduate Dean.

Summary of Checkpoints toward Completion of all Master’s Degree Requirements
The following checkpoints have been established to assist a student in proceeding from admission to graduation. Timely completion of these forms (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/), in sequence, will help to ensure that a student's degree program is in order.

Program of Study (POS): This form (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) must be filed as early as possible and definitely before the completion of 18 semester hours. If a supervisory committee develops the program, the student should be invited to the committee meeting. Once approved, changes in the POS must be submitted on a Change of Program form and approved by the Committee Chair, Department Chair, and Graduate Dean. A valid reason must be given for the change.

Application for Graduate Degree: This is to be filed at least three months before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. The application is available on the Registrar's website (https://www.uah.edu/registrar/commencement/apply-to-graduate/).

Notification of Thesis Defense/Final Examination: Notification of the examination date (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) must be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance of the examination. The examination must be given according to the dates published on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/), and the results reported within two working days to the Graduate Dean before the end
of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. The Graduate Dean may appoint an additional member of the graduate faculty to act as an observer for each thesis defense.

**Report of Thesis Defense/Final Exam:** Following the thesis defense/final exam, the supervisory committee shall submit a signed report (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) to the Graduate School.

**Thesis Signature Form:** The thesis signature form is submitted to the Graduate School by the deadline posted on the website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/dates-deadlines/). After the signature form is received, the Graduate School will contact the student with directions for creating an account in ProQuest. The student will upload the final thesis draft to ProQuest by the Graduate School deadline, and then the student will work with the UAH copyeditor to finalize the manuscript. All copyedits must be finished by the Registrar’s deadline before the published graduation date, or the student will not graduate in that semester.

**Doctoral Degrees**

UAH offers doctoral-level programs in the Colleges of Engineering, Science, and Nursing. For specific information regarding Nursing’s Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degrees, please visit the College of Nursing website (https://www.uah.edu/nursing/graduate-programs/).

**The Doctor of Philosophy Degree**

The doctor of philosophy degree is a research-oriented degree awarded upon the demonstration of scholarly competence. The degree program at UAH is based on the successful completion of a POS designed by the student and a faculty committee. The program may include mastery of certain research skills (e.g., languages, computer programming, statistics, and others approved by the Graduate Council), and must include an independent research project, the results of which are presented in the form of a dissertation.

**Degree Requirements**

The following specific degree requirements are applicable to all Ph.D. degree programs within the University. Additional requirements may be specified by individual colleges and/or departments as shown in this catalog under the appropriate section.

**Course Requirements**

Course requirements, including at least 48 hours of graduate coursework (excluding dissertation research), are defined in the POS and are determined by the appropriate department. Usually, the student will take a majority of the courses in a given field with the remainder in a cognate field. This, however, is not a requirement. A maximum of nine semester hours credit in thesis/research work from the master’s degree may be allowed to count toward the 48-hour requirement. Students must also satisfactorily complete a minimum of 18 semester hours of dissertation research (799). Students must register for dissertation research each semester in which they receive faculty supervision. The approval of the POS should be accomplished as early as possible, but no later than one year after admission to the Ph.D. program. Once approved, the program may be amended only with the approval of the supervisory committee upon submission of the Change to Program of Study (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) form and approval of the Graduate Dean.

**Continuous Registration Requirement**

All students who have completed the minimum coursework requirements for the doctoral degree they are pursuing (excluding dissertation hours) must register for a minimum of three semester hours of graduate credit (to include dissertation credit) each Fall and Spring semester until all degree requirements are complete.

**Transfer Credit**

All credit toward the Ph.D., which has not been earned at UAH, must be acceptable graduate credit from an approved institution. Such credit may be transferred with the approval of the major Department Chair if completed with a grade of B or better. A majority of the credit hours (including dissertation credits) toward a doctoral degree must have been earned at UAH (or, in the case of joint/shared programs, at the participating institutions).

**Academic Residence Requirement**

Residence at UAH as a doctoral student is required for evaluation of the student’s investigative abilities, independent thought, and scholastic progress by faculty members other than the major Advisor. Residence may be established through either 1) being enrolled as a full-time student (at least nine graduate semester hours) either for one continuous academic year, or for Spring and Fall semesters in the same calendar year, or 2) being enrolled in at least six hours of graduate course work in at least three of four consecutive semesters. Colleges and/or departments may have more stringent requirements, and students should refer to the appropriate section of this catalog for details. All research effort presented for residence credit toward the Ph.D. degree must be performed under the direction of a full member of the graduate faculty.

**Supervisory Committee**

A supervisory committee is appointed for each student working toward the Ph.D., usually after satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination administered by the major department. The Ph.D. supervisory committee, which is composed of at least five members, shall be appointed by the Department/Program Chair, with approval of the Graduate Dean as part of the POS approval. Committee members shall all have been approved as graduate faculty, with at least half being full members of the graduate faculty and at least half being from the major department/program. The Committee
Chair, who oversees the dissertation process, must be a full-time UAH graduate faculty member. If the Research Advisor, who oversees the research project, is not a full member of the UAH graduate faculty, then there must be a separate Committee Chair.

**Qualifying Examination**

The Qualifying Examination is given under the auspices of the Graduate School and must be administered by the supervisory committee within one year of the date the student completes the formal coursework on the POS. It is conducted in two distinct stages which may be separated by a length of time deemed appropriate by the supervisory committee. The first stage is a demonstration through written and oral examination that the student is proficient in the subject matter in the POS. The final stage is the dissertation proposal review in which the student prepares a written report and makes a subsequent oral presentation describing the proposed dissertation research. Both the dissertation topic and expected approach(es) must be clearly delineated to the committee's satisfaction in order for a pass to be granted. The presentation of the oral dissertation research proposal must be scheduled through the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance. Once this review is complete, the results of the Qualifying Examination are reported to the Graduate School within two working days on the prescribed form. The presentation of the oral dissertation proposal may be given no more than twice.

**Time Limit**

The doctoral degree must be earned within 10 years (or by the end of the 30th consecutive semester, where consecutive semesters are Fall, Spring, and Summer). The clock starts when the graduate program's first credits are completed (if credits are transferred in, then the clock starts on the date the student is accepted into the program. All requirements must be completed no more than five years (or 15 consecutive semesters) after the student has passed the qualifying examination. Failure to meet this time requirement requires the student to take and pass another qualifying examination and (if required by the program) another implementation review.

**Application for Degree**

All candidates for a Ph.D. degree must apply for the degree by submitting the Application for Graduate Degree (https://www.uah.edu/ registrar/commencement/apply-to-graduate/) and fee to the Registrar's Office at least three months before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed.

**Dissertation**

The dissertation is evidence that the student can independently identify a problem of contemporary significance through familiarity with the current literature in the major field, organize and execute a program of research, recognize and analyze the results, and present them in cogent, well-written exposition. Furthermore, the dissertation should be written in fluent, acceptable English. Dissertation results are expected to be submitted for refereed scholarly publication. All dissertations must be accessible to the general public. A completed copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the major department by the deadlines published on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/) before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. Dissertations must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School's Thesis, Dissertation, and DNP Project Manual.

**Final Examination**

Ph.D. candidates must pass a final examination that includes an oral presentation of the dissertation in the form of a seminar before the student's supervisory committee; the oral presentation is open to the members of the University community. Immediately following the oral presentation, the candidate will be examined by the supervisory committee in a closed meeting. The examination must be given within the semester in which degree requirements are to be completed, according to the dates set by the Graduate School. The results must be reported to the Graduate Dean within two working days. A written notice of the time and place of examination must be sent to the Graduate Dean at least two weeks before the examination date. The Graduate Dean may appoint an additional member of the graduate faculty to act as an observer for each dissertation defense. Once set the examination becomes an official Graduate School matter; the date cannot be changed without prior arrangement among the supervisory committee members and the student, and without approval of the Graduate Dean. After approval by the Graduate Dean, the department sends a copy of the written notice to the candidate and each member of the supervisory committee. A student may take the final examination no more than twice. Students must be in good academic standing (3.000 or better) to schedule a dissertation defense.

**Summary of Checkpoints toward Completion of Degree Requirements**

The following checkpoints have been established to assist a student in proceeding from admission to graduation. Timely completion of the forms, in sequence, will help to ensure that a student's degree program is in order.

- **POS**: The supervisory committee and the student should meet to develop a complete POS (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) for the student. The approval of the POS should be accomplished as early as possible, but no later than one year after admission to the Ph.D. program. Once approved, changes in the POS must be submitted on a Change to Program of Study (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) form and approved by the Committee Chair, Department Chair, and Graduate Dean. A valid reason must be given for the change.

- **Notification of Qualifying Examination**: Notification of the qualifying examination (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) must be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks before the examination date.

- **Report of Qualifying Examination**: Following the examination, the supervisory committee shall submit a signed report (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) to the Graduate School.
Application for Graduate Degree: This should be filed three months before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. The application (https://www.uah.edu/registrar/commencement/apply-to-graduate/) is available on the Registrar’s website.

Notification of Dissertation Defense: Notification of the defense (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) must be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks before the examination date. This examination must be taken by the deadlines published on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/) before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. The Graduate Dean may appoint an additional member of the graduate faculty to act as an observer for each dissertation defense.

Report of Dissertation Defense: Following the defense, the supervisory committee shall submit a signed report (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/resources/forms/) to the Graduate School.

Dissertation Signature Form: The dissertation signature form with supervisory committee, Department/Program Chair, and College Dean signatures must be submitted to the Graduate School by the deadline posted on the website. After the signature form is received, the Graduate School will contact the student with directions for creating an account in ProQuest. The student will upload the final dissertation draft to ProQuest by the posted deadline on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/), and then the student will work with the UAH copyeditor to finalize the manuscript. All copyedits must be finished by the Registrar’s deadline before the published graduation date, or the student will not graduate in that semester.

Dissertation Submission

After the student has passed their dissertation defense, and by the published deadline on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/), the dissertation signature form (with supervisory committee, Department/Program Chair, and College Dean signatures) must be submitted to the Graduate School. After the signature form is received, the Graduate School will contact the student with directions for creating an account in ProQuest. The student will upload the final dissertation draft to ProQuest by the posted deadline on the Graduate School website (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/), and then the student will work with the UAH copyeditor to finalize the manuscript. All copyedits must be finished by the Registrar’s deadline before the published graduation date, or the student will not graduate in that semester. Dissertations must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School’s Thesis, Dissertation, and DNP Project Manual. Upon completion of the copyediting process and the Graduate School’s acceptance of a student’s dissertation, the Graduate Dean will sign the dissertation signature form.

All dissertations must be accessible to the general public. Detailed procedures (https://www.uah.edu/graduate/) for submission can be found on the Graduate School website. For specific questions call (256) 824-6055.

Late Submission

Students who miss the published dissertation/DNP project deadlines but submit all required documents to the Graduate School by the end of the current semester will not graduate in the current semester; instead they will fall under the dissertation/DNP project deadlines of the subsequent semester. These students qualify for a 0-credit-hour option the subsequent semester if the 0-credit-hour option is offered by their departments. Students may only take the 0-credit-hour option once and must consult with their Committee Chairs in order to register for the 0-credit-hour option. All copyedits in ProQuest must be completed by the Registrar’s deadline at least one week prior to the published graduation date in the semester during which the student plans to graduate.