

# Graduate Degree Requirements

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

1. Overall grade average must be B (3.0) or better on all graduate credit hours at UAH. In addition, the grade average must be B (3.0) or better on courses taken in the current graduate degree program;
2. No grade lower than a C 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% 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. To avoid delay, students are encouraged to submit a Program of Study with the help of a faculty advisor before the completion of 12 semester hours of graduate coursework, in order to assure that courses taken will apply to the degree.

### Thesis Plan

Degree requirements under this plan include completion of at least 24 semester hours of graduate course work and at least 6 credit hours of coursework (699) toward the writing of an acceptable thesis. Students working on a thesis must register for thesis credit each term 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. The thesis is supervised and approved by a faculty committee composed of at least three members of the graduate faculty and appointed by the chair of the department, with approval of the graduate dean. A majority of the committee must be from the major department/program. The chair and at least half of the committee must 1) be full-time UAH faculty members and 2) have full membership in the graduate faculty. If the committee chair is different from the advisor, the advisor must also be a full member of the graduate faculty.

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 at <http://uah.edu> (<http://grad.uah.edu>)/graduate (<http://uah.edu/graduate>). After the student has passed his/her thesis defense a copy of the thesis signed by the committee, department chair and college dean must be submitted to the Graduate School for final proofreading and approval by the graduate dean. Theses must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation Manual, available online at [uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual](http://uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual) or in paper copy from the Graduate School. Students must be in good academic standing (3.0 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 chair of the major department 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 advisor, 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 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.

### Transfer Credit

With permission of the major department, students may transfer up to twelve (12) semester hours of acceptable graduate credit earned in an approved institution and may count it toward a master's degree. No transferred credit may be more than ten 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 or shared programs with other schools).

### Time Limit

All requirements toward the master's degree, including transfer credit, must have been earned during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the master's degree is to be awarded. Credit for individual graduate courses at UAH completed more than 18 semesters but less than 30 semesters before the completion of all requirements for the degree must be validated by the department that offered the course through the administering of a written or oral examination. Once a course is validated, it is considered valid through the tenth year only. Credit for courses more than ten years old cannot be validated. Up to six hours of transfer courses that are more than 18 semesters but less than

30 semesters may be validated by a committee of at least three members of the graduate faculty appointed by the department or program chair, with the results reported to the graduate dean.

### **Application for Degree**

All candidates for a master's degree must apply for the degree by submitting the Application for Advanced Degree and fee to the Registrar's Office at least three months before the degree is to be conferred. Consult the graduate school website for specific deadline dates.

### **Final Examination**

A final comprehensive examination, or satisfactory performance (B or better) in a capstone course, is required of all candidates for a master's degree. 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. The examination must be given according to the dates set by the School of Graduate Studies, usually at least six weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed, and the results reported within two working days to the graduate dean. A written notice of the time and place of examination is sent to the graduate dean at least two weeks before the examination date. The graduate dean appoints an additional member of the graduate faculty to act as observer for all thesis defenses. Once set the examination becomes an official Graduate School matter; the date cannot be changed without prior arrangement amongst the supervisory committee members and the student and without approval of the graduate dean. For more details, consult the Graduate School Handbook.

After approval by the graduate dean, the department sends a copy of the written notice to the candidate and each member of the committee. A student may take the final examination no more than twice.

### **Thesis Submission**

After the student has passed their thesis defense and at least six weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed, a final draft of the thesis with supervisory committee, department/program chair, and college dean signatures must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, with personal contact information. Theses must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation Manual, available online at [uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual](http://uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual). Student not in compliance will be notified. Upon acceptance by the Graduate School of a student's thesis, the Graduate Dean will forward a signed copy to the student who will then upload it to Proquest. All theses must be accessible to the general public. Detailed procedures for submission can be obtained by calling (256)824-6002.

## **Second Master's Degree**

A student is permitted to apply no more than six semester hours of credit earned for one 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, in sequence, will help to insure that a student's degree program is in order.

**Program of Study:** This form 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 Program of Study 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 Advanced 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. It is available in the Registrar's Office.

**Notification of Thesis Defense/Final Examination:** Notification of the examination date must be turned in to the Graduate Studies Office at least two weeks in advance of the examination. The final examination must be taken at least six weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed, and according to the dates set by the Office of Graduate Studies and not earlier than the semester in which the student will complete all required coursework. A member of the committee will be appointed to be the graduate observer.

**Report of Thesis Defense/Final Exam:** Following the thesis defense/final exam the committee shall submit a signed report to the Graduate Studies Office.

## **Doctoral Degrees**

UAH offers doctoral level programs in the Colleges of Engineering, Science and Nursing. For specific information about the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program please see the College of Nursing section of the catalog.

### **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 program of study 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 Program of Study 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 Program of Study 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 of Program 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 3 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 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 9 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 6 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 the 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 supervisory committee is appointed by the department chair with approval of the graduate dean as part of the Program of Study approval. The supervisory committee is composed of at least five members of the graduate faculty, with at least half being from the major department/program. The chair and at least half of the committee must 1) be full-time UAH faculty members and 2) have full membership in the graduate faculty. If the committee chair is different from the advisor, the advisor must also be a full member of the graduate faculty.

### **Qualifying Examination**

The Qualifying Examination is given under the auspices of the School of Graduate Studies and must be administered by the Supervisory Committee within one year of the date the student completes the formal coursework on the Program of Study. 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 Program of Study. 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 School of Graduate Studies at least two weeks in advance. Once this review is complete, the results of the Qualifying Examination are reported to the School of Graduate Studies within two working days on the prescribed form. The presentation of the oral dissertation proposal may be given no more than twice.

### **Time Limit**

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed no more than five years after the student has passed the qualifying examination. Failure to meet this time requirement requires the student to take and pass another qualifying examination.

### **Application for Degree**

All candidates for a Ph.D. degree must apply for the degree by submitting the Application for Advanced Degree 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 at least eight weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. See the graduate school website for specific deadlines. Dissertations must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation Manual, which is available online at [uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual](http://uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual).

## Final Examination

The final examination must include an oral presentation of the dissertation in the form of a seminar before the student's committee; this presentation is open to the members of the University community. The examination must be given at least six weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed, and the results reported within two working days to the graduate dean. The committee appoints a member of the graduate faculty to act as observer for all dissertation defenses. Once set, the examination becomes an official Graduate School matter; the date cannot be changed without prior arrangement amongst the supervisory committee members and the student and without approval of the graduate dean. A student may take the final examination no more than twice. Students must be in good academic standing 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 insure that a student's degree program is in order.

**Program of Study:** The supervisory committee and the student should meet to develop a complete program for the student. Once approved, changes in the Program of Study 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.

**Notification of Qualifying Examination:** Notification of the qualifying examination must be turned in to the Graduate Studies Office at least two weeks before the examination date.

**Report of Qualifying Examination:** Following the examination the committee shall submit a signed report to the Graduate Studies Office.

**Application for Advanced Degree:** This should be filed three months before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. (Available from the Registrar's Office, SSB 120.)

**Notification of Dissertation Defense:** Notification of the defense must be turned in to the Graduate Studies Office at least two weeks before the examination date. This examination must be taken at least six weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed. A member of the committee will be appointed to be the graduate observer.

**Report of Dissertation Defense:** Following the defense the committee shall submit a signed report to the Graduate Studies Office.

## Dissertation Submission

After the student has passed his/her dissertation defense and at least six weeks before the end of the semester in which degree requirements are expected to be completed, a final draft of the dissertation with supervisory committee, department/program chair, and college dean signatures must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, with personal contact information. Dissertations must comply with the regulations set forth in the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation Manual, available online at [uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual](http://uah.edu/graduate/resources/thesis-manual). Student not in compliance will be notified. Upon acceptance by the Graduate School of a student's dissertation, the Graduate Dean will forward a signed copy to the student who will then upload it to Proquest. All dissertations must be accessible to the general public. Detailed procedures for submission can be obtained by calling (256)824-6002.