MASTER'S DEGREE BY THESIS

Admission
Admission to a master’s degree program as a regular student is granted, on the recommendation of the department concerned, to:

• the holder of an honours baccalaureate or its equivalent, as set out in the Admission Requirements (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/admission/admission-requirements/); or
• a student who has satisfied the requirements for transfer from the provisional student category.

Individual programs may have additional admission requirements. Before applying, applicants are responsible for consulting the specific program in this calendar regarding such requirements.

Minimum Duration
At least two semesters of full-time study must be devoted to a master’s degree program if the student is admitted as a regular student. However, some programs may require a longer minimum duration period. A student admitted as a provisional student requiring two semesters in that category, must spend at least one additional semester as a regular full-time student. For a student registered part-time, the minimum duration period is four part-time semesters.

Completion
Normally, a thesis must be formally submitted (see Submission of Thesis (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/thesis/submission-thesis/)) or the program otherwise completed, within six semesters (Program Duration) (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/registration/program-duration/). However, some programs may require completion of the degree requirements within a briefer time period.

Advising
The student’s program is established and progress kept under review by the academic unit in which the student is enrolled (see Enrolment and Registration (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/registration/enrolment-registration/)). The day-to-day responsibility will rest with the Advisor. There will be an Advisory Committee of at least two graduate faculty members, the chair of which committee is normally the Advisor of the student’s program. Departments and schools are encouraged to involve graduate faculty from other academic units as members of Advisory Committees. The Advisory Committee must be established and the Advisory Committee Appointment form submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies not later than the 20th class day of the student’s second registered semester.

Courses
A master’s degree by thesis at the University of Guelph requires the demonstration of a reasonable mastery of a concentrated area/field of study. This is shown by the achievement of satisfactory standings in courses, as determined by the department, and completion of a thesis.

Prescribed Studies
The proportion of weight attached to the research and thesis may vary, even within a department. Accordingly, the number of prescribed courses may correspondingly vary. Where the student’s program requires a thesis, the number of course credits will not be fewer than 1.5, and must be made up entirely of graduate level courses. Any courses selected that exceed the 1.5 minimum credits must also be acceptable to the department and the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies) for credit towards the graduate degree. The student must obtain an overall weighted average grade of at least ‘B’ in the prescribed course (see Establishment of Program (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/student-programs-establishment-program-study/) and Prescribed Studies (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-standings/prescribed-studies/)).

Additional Courses
In addition to the prescribed studies the candidate may take ancillary courses that support the specific discipline. These courses may be at either the undergraduate or the graduate level.

Research
At least one full-time semester must be devoted to thesis research. Students should register for UNIV*7500 Research/Writing in each semester that they are working towards their thesis and/or are not taking any other courses for which an active section exists. Individual programs may require a longer period. To avoid undue prolongation of the student’s program, the research topic should be identified early in the program and approved by the Advisory Committee.

Thesis
Each student will submit a thesis, expressed in satisfactory literary form, based on research in a topic connected with the student’s special discipline. The thesis must demonstrate the student’s capacity for original and independent work and should include a critical evaluation of work that has previously been done in the student’s area/field of research. The thesis should emphasize any new conclusions that may be drawn from the student’s own research.

For purposes of equivalency calculations, a master’s thesis is generally considered to be the equivalent of 2.0 credits.

Procedures
The thesis may be submitted at any time of the year, but candidates are encouraged to have the final examination well in advance of the deadline date for thesis submission. Students should be aware of the deadline schedule, a copy of which may be obtained in the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. and Postdoctoral Studies. Students should discuss their thesis with their Advisors early in their final semester.

As the student writes their thesis, they are expected to be in regular communication with the Advisory committee who will review a draft(s) and recommend revisions. When a draft is completed that the Advisory Committee recommends for examination, the final draft is sent to the members of the Master’s Examination Committee and the final oral examination is scheduled.

Each department is expected to establish master’s examination guidelines to assist members of the Examination Committee to follow, as far as possible, a uniform procedure in the evaluation of theses, and in the conduct of oral defenses of the thesis, so that all students are subject to uniformly fair examinations. Where policy in this calendar appears to conflict with that in departmental guidelines, the policy in this calendar takes precedence.
Following the master’s examination the student, if successful, prepares
the thesis in final form for its submission to the Assistant VP Graduate
Studies (see below). The thesis must include any minor corrections or
revisions by the Examination Committee. Approval of the thesis takes the
form of a Certificate of Approval, signed by the Examination Committee.

Master’s Examination
The final oral examination, devoted chiefly to the defence of the thesis,
is a departmental examination identified as the master’s examination.
The Master’s Examination Committee normally consists of four members
appointed by the Department Chair, as follows:

- A member of the regular graduate faculty or retired faculty with
  Associated Graduate Faculty status of the department, who is not a
  member of the Advisory Committee, to act as chair of the master’s
  Examination Committee and to make arrangements therefor;
- A member of the candidate’s Advisory Committee (normally, the
  Advisor);
- A member of the graduate faculty who may be a member of the
  Advisory Committee;
- A fourth member appointed from among graduate faculty from
  another department, from the department or from the Advisory
  Committee, according to departmental and/or examination
  requirements.

If possible, a graduate faculty member of another department should be
included on the Master’s Examination Committee.

Note:

- The Chair serves to administer and ensure the proper conduct of
  the examination. The Chair is expected to exercise full control over
  the proceedings and does not participate directly in questioning the
  candidate during the examination. In unforeseen circumstances
  where an examiner is unable to attend due to sudden illness,
  accident, etc., the Chair will attempt to receive questions to ask on
  behalf of the absent member, to be answered by the student to the
  satisfaction of the examiners.

The examination is open to the public; members of the audience
may question the candidate only upon invitation of the Chair of the
Examination Committee.

The examination is passed and the thesis approved if there is
no more than one negative vote. An abstention is regarded as a
negative vote. The report to the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate
Studies) will record the decision as unsatisfactory or satisfactory.
If unsatisfactory, the candidate may be given a second attempt. A
second unsatisfactory result constitutes a recommendation to the
Board of Graduate Studies that the student be required to withdraw
(see Unsatisfactory Progress (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/
general-regulations/unsatisfactory-progress/) and Appeals of Decisions
(calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/appeals-
decisions/)).

Copies of Thesis
One electronic (.pdf) copy of the certified thesis must be submitted to
the Atrium (https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/) by the thesis submission
deadline date shown in the Schedule of Dates in the Graduate Calendar.
A brief abstract consisting of no more than 150 words must also be
included in the electronic submission. The Certificate of Approval signed
by the Examination Committee, a copy of the circulation waiver, and the
copying license must also be submitted to the Office of Graduate and
Postdoctoral Studies. Departments may have a requirement to submit a
bound copy of the thesis.

Publication
The university requires publication of the thesis in the following manner:

One electronic copy of the thesis is uploaded by the National Library
of Canada, which will also receive the agreement form signed by the
student authorizing the National Library to publish the thesis and to make
copies available for sale on request. The National Library will upload the
thesis exactly as it is and will list the thesis in Theses Canada (https://
www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/theses/Pages/theses-canada.aspx) as
a publication of the National Library.

An abstract of not more than 150 words, prepared by the author and
approved by the Advisor, and submitted as part of the electronic thesis
submission, is also uploaded by the National Library.

The National Library’s Theses Non-Exclusive License (https://
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/frm-nl59-2-e.pdf) will be sent to
the student prior to the master’s examination, to be signed and submitted
to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies immediately after the
successful completion of the examination.

The student, in consultation with the Advisor and the Department Chair,
has the right to request that circulation and/or copying of the thesis in
any form be withheld for up to one year.

Program Regulations
Individual programs may have regulations in addition to those described
in this section. Students are responsible for consulting the specific
program in this calendar regarding any such regulations. University
regulations, as specified herein, take precedence, and may not be
overruled by any program regulation.