Master’s Degree Requirements

Minimum Hours
A minimum of thirty (30) hours is required for a master’s degree, at least sixteen (16) hours of which must be at the 6000 level. At least twenty (20) hours must be in formal, regularly scheduled course work, ten (10) of which must be at the 6000 level. Up to six (6) hours of 4000-level courses may be taken as part of a planned degree program. Additional graduate credit may be earned in 4000-level courses only if specifically approved by the appropriate College Dean. Students enrolled in undergraduate courses as part of a planned degree program are expected to demonstrate a superior level of performance. Graduate students may not enroll for more than 18 hours in any semester without written permission from the College Dean.

Institutional Enrollment Requirement
The majority of credits toward a graduate degree must be earned through instruction offered by the institution (e.g. USF Tampa, USF St. Petersburg, USF Polytechnic, USF Sarasota-Manatee) granting the degree. For information about the minimum number of credit hours required for the degree refer to the degree requirements in the program listing and the Transfer of Credit Policy.

Time Limitations
Master’s and Ed.S. degrees must be completed within five (5) years from the student’s date of admission for graduate study. Courses taken prior to admission to the USF graduate program, for example as non-degree seeking or from other institutions that were transferred in, can be no older than seven years at the time of graduation. Master and Ed.S. degrees (including dual degree programs) that require course work in excess of 50 credit hours may be granted a longer statute of limitations by the University Graduate Council.

Time Limit Extensions
In the event that a student nears the end of the time limitation as specified above, but the student needs more time to complete the degree, the student may submit a request for an extension using the Time Limit Extension Request Form, available on the Graduate School website http://www.grad.usf.edu/student-forms.asp

Requests must include

- the reasons for the delay in completion,
- the anticipated time needed for completion,
- and endorsements from the graduate faculty advisor, graduate program, and College Dean or designee,
- a detailed plan of study and timeline for the remaining requirements for the degree

prior to submission to the Graduate School for approval. If approved, the time limit extension also applies to courses applied toward the degree. However, programs may require additional or repeat coursework as part of the condition of the time limit extension. Students who exceed the time limitations may have their registration placed on hold until a request for extension has been approved. Only one time limit extension request is permitted. Students who are temporarily unable to continue the program should submit a Leave of Absence Request, which extends the time limit for the duration of the approved Leave (see the section on Leave of Absence in the Enrollment Requirements section.)

Enrollment Requirements
Refer to the Academic Policies Section

Major Professor
The Major Professor serves as the student’s advisor and mentor. Students should confer with the department to confirm the internal process and timeline for the selection and appointment of the Major Professor. The student must identify a major professor and receive that person’s agreement to serve as major professor. The selection of the Major Professor must be approved and appointed by the department as soon as possible, but no later than the time the student has completed 50% of the program. Students must have a major professor in order to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. If a major professor cannot be identified or in the event a major professor is unable or unwilling to continue serving on the student’s committee, the student is responsible for finding another major professor. Students who are unable to find a replacement major professor should confer with the Program Director for available options (including converting to a non-thesis program if available.) If no other options
exist the student may be requested to voluntarily withdraw from the program or may be honorably withdrawn in good academic standing. The student and major professor should plan a program of study which, when completed, will satisfy the degree requirements specified. A copy of this program, signed by the student and professor, must be maintained in the student’s department file.

Major Professors must meet the following requirements:

- Be graduate faculty, as defined by the University. Faculty who do not meet this definition may serve as Co-Major Professor with faculty who do
- Be engaged in current and sustained scholarly, creative, or research activities and have met departmental (or equivalent) requirements
- Have been approved by the Department Chair (or equivalent) to serve as a Major Professor or Co-Major Professor

The membership of graduate faculty will be based upon criteria developed within the appropriate program or department and approved at the college level. These criteria must be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School.

In the event a Major Professor leaves the University (i.e. for an appointment at another university, due to retirement, etc.) and the Major Professor is willing to continue serving on the student’s committee, the Major Professor then becomes a Co-Major Professor on the committee and another faculty is appointed as the other Co-Major Professor. It is important that one of the Co-Major Professors be accessible on the university campus for the student to make satisfactory progress on the thesis/dissertation. In the event a Major Professor is on temporary leave (e.g. sabbatical, research, etc.); the Major Professor shall coordinate with the Program Director to facilitate the needs of the student. In some instances a student may choose to have two professors serve as Major Professor. In this situation the faculty are approved as “Co-Major Professors” and jointly serve in that role. Consequently both faculty must sign approval on paperwork pertaining to the student’s processing (i.e. committee form, change of committee form, etc.)

(Co-) Major Professor(s) of the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Responsibilities
Available on the Graduate School Website: [http://www.grad.usf.edu/newsite/policies.asp](http://www.grad.usf.edu/newsite/policies.asp)
Thesis Committee
Students working toward a thesis degree will have the benefit of a committee of members of the graduate faculty. The committee will approve the course of study for the student and plan for research, supervise the research and any comprehensive qualifying exams, and read and approve the thesis for content and format.

Composition
The committee will consist of the major professor and at least two other members or co-major professors and at least one other member of the department or area of interest in which the degree is sought. (Colleges and Programs may require additional committee members and specify characteristics.)

Member Definition
All graduate faculty, as defined by the University and the College/Department, and approved by their department and college, are assumed by the Graduate School as qualified to be a member of and/or supervise a committee. Persons desiring to serve on a Masters committee who are not defined as Graduate Faculty (i.e. visiting faculty, professionals, etc.) by the University and the College/Department must submit a curriculum vitae and be approved by the Department, College, and Graduate School, for each committee.

Approval
Once a committee has been determined, a Supervisory Committee Form needs to be completed by the student and submitted to the Committee Members for original signatures. Check with the College for instructions and forms. The original appointment form and two (2) copies should be submitted to the College Associate Dean’s office for approval. A copy of the approved form should be kept in the student’s file. An approved and current Committee Form must be on file in the program/college before graduation may be certified. Committee forms need to be processed as early in the program as possible, but no later than the semester prior to graduation. (Colleges and departments may institute additional requirements for membership on Supervisory Committees.)

Changes to Committee
Changes to a Supervisory Committee must be submitted on a Change of Committee Form. Check with the College for instructions and forms. Original signatures of faculty being added to the Committee, along with the approval signature of the (Co-) Major Professor(s), must be on the form. Faxed signatures are acceptable. Faculty who are removed from the Committee are not required to sign the form, provided that the (Co-) Major Professor(s) has signed. In such instances the signature of the (Co-)Major Professor(s) indicate(s) approval of the change, as well as acknowledgement and approval of the change by the removed member. Any non-faculty being added to a committee must submit a Curriculum Vitae (CV) for college approval. Change of Committee Forms should be submitted for approval as soon as the change takes place. Changes to a Committee are official only once approved and filed by the program and college.

Masters Comprehensive Examination
Prior to clearance for the degree, candidates must perform satisfactorily on a comprehensive examination or an alternative method designated by the academic unit to measure student competency in the major area. Students must be enrolled for a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit during the semester when the comprehensive examination is taken. If the exam is taken between semesters, the student must be enrolled for a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit in the semester before or following the exam.

Thesis
If a thesis is required, it must conform to the guidelines of the University. Refer to the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines, available on the web at http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis.asp for complete information about requirements, procedures, and deadlines. For enrollment requirements, refer to the Academic Policies section in the Catalog.

Format
The Thesis must conform to one of two formats:
Option 1- a traditional format\textsuperscript{1} inclusive of:

Part I: Preliminary Pages
Title Page
Dedication (optional page)
Acknowledgments (optional page)
Table of Contents
List of Tables (if applicable)
List of Figures (if applicable)
Abstract

Part II: Text (divided by chapter or section headings)

Part III: References / Bibliography\textsuperscript{2}
Appendices Title Page
Appendix Sections (if applicable)

Option 2 – a collection of articles/papers instead of chapters. References may be at the end of each section or at the end of the entire document. Copyright permissions (if applicable) must be noted on the Acknowledgements page

Part I: Preliminary Pages
Title Page
Dedication (optional page)
Acknowledgments and copyright permission (if applicable)
Table of Contents
Abstract
Introduction Chapter Overview

Part II: Collection of Articles/Papers

Part III: References / Bibliography\textsuperscript{3}
Appendices Title Page
Appendix Sections (if applicable)

\textit{Directed Research}

Directed Research hours may satisfy up to 50% of the thesis hour requirement.

\textsuperscript{1} Deviations from the available format are acceptable if approved in advance by the Supervisory Committee and Graduate School
\textsuperscript{2} Include either References or a Bibliography, as specified by your style guide
\textsuperscript{3} Include either References or a Bibliography, as specified by your style guide
Manuscript Processing Fee
Students participating in the thesis/dissertation process are required to pay a processing fee. More information is available on the Thesis and Dissertation website.

Exchange of Thesis for Non-Thesis Credit
If a student changes from thesis to non-thesis during a semester and is currently enrolled in thesis credit, the current thesis credits may be exchanged without academic penalty if a Graduate School Petition is filed with the Graduate School no later than the last day to withdraw without Academic Penalty. If a student enrolled in a thesis required program has taken thesis credits but elects to change to non-thesis track or program, the accumulated thesis credits may not be exchanged or converted to another non-structured credit. The thesis hours will remain on the transcript and will retain the “Z” grade.

Thesis Defense
Policies and procedures for the thesis defense are handled within the College and Program. Contact the College and Program for requirements.

Thesis Final Submission Guidelines
Information on requirements for submission of the finished and approved manuscript copies is available online at the Thesis and Dissertation website [http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis.asp](http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis.asp). Students who fail to submit the final copy of a thesis by the posted submission deadline will be considered for graduation in the following semester and must therefore apply for graduation by the posted deadline, enroll in a minimum of two (2) thesis hours for that subsequent semester, and meet the submission requirements as posted on the Thesis/Dissertation website. Only after the Graduate School has approved the manuscript can the student be certified for the degree.

Mandatory Electronic Submission
Students are required to submit the thesis in an electronic format (ETD). Requirements and procedures are available at the Graduate School website [http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis.asp](http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis.asp)

Submission to Pro-Quest
All theses will be submitted to Pro-Quest for microfilming and archiving, effective Fall 2010.

Changes after Publication
Once a thesis is approved and accepted by the Graduate School for publication, it cannot be changed.

Release of Thesis Publications
The University recognizes the benefits from collaboration with sponsors on research projects but also recognizes the possibility of conflicts of interest in the disclosure of the results of the collaborations. While the sponsor’s economic interests in the restriction of disclosure should be considered, the University has a primary mission to extend knowledge and disseminate it to the public and the broader academic community. The University’s “Statement of Policy Regarding Inventions and Works” acknowledges the possible need for delays in publication of sponsored research to protect the sponsor’s interests, but it provides no definite guidelines for the restrictions of publication beyond the statement: “Disclosure delays mutually acceptable to the Inventor, the Vice President for Research, and the sponsor, if any, are authorized in order to allow patent applications to be filled prior to publication, thereby preserving patent rights...” 4

To protect the University’s primary goal from un-due compromise, the University has adopted the following guidelines:

---

1. The recommendations of sponsors, regarding publication of research results should be considered advisory rather than mandatory.

2. In support of academic discourse and the mission to promote and share academic works, Theses will be released for worldwide access once submitted to and approved by the USF Graduate School. In the event that a patent or copyright application provides reason to delay the release of the Thesis, a petition to request a one year delay may be submitted to the Graduate School for consideration. Such requests must be received by the format check of the thesis.

3. Students should not be delayed in the final defense of their theses by agreements involving publication delays.

**Duty to Disclose New Inventions and Works**


**Thesis Change of Grade**

In the semester in which the final manuscript has been received, reviewed, and certified for permanent filing in the University Library, the Graduate School submits the change of grade from “Z” to “S” for the last registration of thesis courses to the office of the registrar when all grades are due at the end of the semester.