

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

CAPSTONE ACTIVITIES

Many master's programs require a significant capstone activity to allow students to demonstrate the ability to conduct scholarly or professional work in their field of study. Depending on the specific field of study, students may be required to complete one or more of the capstone activities below. Students who complete their capstone projects will demonstrate mastery of content as well as professional written and oral communication skills. See the list of Graduate Institutional Learning Outcomes (IGLOs) for more information.

Comprehensive Exams

A comprehensive examination is designed to reveal the quality of the student's preparation for advanced work in the field and his or her ability to complete graduate work at the master's level. Programs note this requirement as a 697 course on the transcript. This course is graded "P" (pass) or "F" (fail). Some programs may also choose to use the grade designation "HP" (pass with distinction). A student will not be able to graduate from the program until a passing score has been obtained. Records or copies of comprehensive exams will be maintained by individual colleges or schools. Examination deadlines are established by the respective academic deans. Student fees will not apply when the student registers only for a 697 course.

Internship

A professional internship must include "real-world" experience involving a specific project, product, or set of projects and products to be agreed upon by the student and his or her advisory committee (including the workplace supervisor). At the completion of the semester-length project, a written report is prepared, modeled after that which would be expected by a private firm or government agency. Following review of the report, the student stands for an oral defense.

Portfolio Review

A portfolio review includes artifacts demonstrating competency and mastery of several dimensions of a program's learning outcomes. This portfolio will adhere to program- or industry-prescribed standards. The review will be conducted as an interview between a student and faculty selected by the program, to discuss the student accomplishments as well as strengths and weaknesses of the work submitted.

Practicum

A practicum is a recognized capstone activity that engages a community-based research andragogy. This discipline focused approach uses applied and engaged scholarship, under the guidance of program faculty. The aim of practicum is to synergize expected program competencies with real world application for the purpose of community impact and positive social change. Practicum projects may be individual or group endeavors. They should also offer evidence of subject research and be presented in the style applicable to the subject area.

Special Project

The Special Project should offer evidence of subject research and must be presented in the writing style applicable to the subject area. Joint authorship is not permitted. The original copy of the project must be submitted to the appropriate dean for approval before the end of the term or semester in which graduation is expected and must meet the deadline specified in the Calendar. This copy is final and should need no correction. When approved, the project will be deposited in the RFK Memorial Library.

Thesis

The Master's Thesis offers evidence of substantial research and an adequate treatment of a well-defined subject. No mere essay or compilation of facts will be accepted. The thesis must be written on a subject related to the major and approved by the student's Graduate Program. Joint authorship is not permitted. For thesis deadlines, please check with Graduate Admissions for the current semester listing. Students pursuing doctoral study are strongly encouraged to complete a thesis project.

Many of these capstone activities are required by the programs and the University for accreditation purposes in different disciplines and are used by graduate programs to provide evidence of demonstrated student learning, competencies, and dispositions for the profession or further study.