

 جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة United Arab Emirates University <b>UAEU</b>	<b>Graduate Studies Policies Manual</b>		Policy Number	GP-02
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	<i>Responsible Office:</i> DVC Research & Grad. Studies		Due Date for Next Review	01-Sep-2016
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## 2. Master's Programs

### Overview

Outlines the framework that governs students' pathway to graduation from a Master's degree program.

### Scope

Applies to all Master's degree programs offered by UAEU.

### Objective

The University is committed to the highest academic and administrative standards in the operation of its graduate programs. This Policy and its related Procedures provide the structures and processes required to manage student application, admission, progress and graduation with respect to Master's degree programs offered by the UAEU.

### Policy

1. The University adopts a common framework for the operation of Master's degree programs to ensure that common standards and due process apply to student application, admission, progress and graduation from all Master's degree programs of the University.
2. The framework is expressed in the Procedures for Master's Programs and is the shared responsibility of the Deans of the Colleges, the Graduate Studies Council, and the Dean of the CGS.
3. Rules and regulations relevant to the Master's degree programs offered by individual Colleges must not contradict and cannot annul any part of these Policies and Procedures. College rules and regulations must be placed on file in the CGS.
4. College rules and regulations for professional Master's programs will ensure the implementation of an appropriate experiential learning component and professional skills development, in combination with advanced course work in the academic discipline.

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## Procedures of Policy No. (2) - Master's Programs

### 1. Master's Program Administration and Committees

- a) The Assistant Dean in each College will oversee all graduate programs in the College.
- b) Each Master's degree program will be overseen by a Coordinator who is a UAEU faculty member appointed by the Signatory Authority. Interdisciplinary programs shall have an Executive Committee nominated by the participating departments and approved by the Signatory Authority. The Coordinator reports to the Chair of the respective Department offering the Master program. Coordinators of Interdisciplinary or Multidisciplinary degree programs report to the Assistant Dean of the host College.
- c) The Master program Coordinator organizes the activities of the program including the scheduling of course offerings, and provides, either directly or through faculty colleagues in the program, academic advice to all students enrolled.
- d) Each student choosing the thesis option must submit, after consultation with one or more eligible faculty members, a proposal to the Coordinator of the Master's Program requesting a UAEU faculty member to be designated as his/her Master's Thesis Advisor. The program may require other information such as the study plan of the student, the summary of the research topic, and any budgetary requirement from the program for the Master's thesis research. Upon approval by the Assistant Dean, the Master's Thesis Advisor also becomes the academic advisor for the student.
- e) The student may also request, after consultation with the designated Master's Thesis Advisor, to designate a second UAEU faculty member and/or a qualified person from an external organization of a relevant industry as Co-Advisor(s). In this case, the Advisor and the Co-Advisor(s) will constitute the student's Advisory Committee. The name of the Master's Thesis Advisor and, if applicable, that of the Co-Advisor(s) is to be submitted to the Dean of CGS before the end of the student's first semester in the Program. Any change thereafter of the Master's Thesis Advisor(s) is to be immediately reported to the Dean of the CGS.

### 2. Application to Master's Programs

- a) The CGS has established minimum requirements for admission to Master's Programs. Individual Master's Programs may set additional and/or higher standards for admission. The minimum requirements are:
  - (i) A Bachelor's degree or its equivalent from an accredited university recognized by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research;
  - (ii) A cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or equivalent, in all undergraduate work; and
  - (iii) A score of at least 6.0 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Academic exam or equivalent, for all disciplines delivered predominantly in English. This test score must be less than two years old at the time of application, with the following exceptions:
    - A native speaker of English who has completed his/her undergraduate education in an English-medium institution and in a country where English is the official language; or
    - An applicant with undergraduate degree from an English-medium institution

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who can provide evidence of acquiring a minimum TOEFL score of 500 on the paper-based test, or its equivalent, at the time of admission to his/her undergraduate program.

- (iv) An applicant with a Bachelor degree recognized by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research may be granted conditional admission into a Master's program in one and only one of the following cases:
- An applicant with an IELTS score of 5.5, or its equivalent. Such a student must meet the following requirements during the period of conditional admission or be subject to dismissal:
    - (a) Must achieve a minimum IELTS score of 6.0, or its equivalent, by the end of the student's first semester of study;
    - (b) May take a maximum of six (6) credits hours in the first semester, not including intensive English courses;
    - (c) Must achieve an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the first 9 credit hours of credit-bearing courses studied in the Master's program.
  - An applicant with an undergraduate cumulative GPA less than 3.0 but equal or higher than 2.5, or its equivalent. Such a student must meet the following requirements during the period of conditional admission or be subject to dismissal:
    - (a) May take a maximum of nine (9) credits hours in the first semester of study;
    - (b) Must achieve an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the first 9 credit hours of credit-bearing courses studied in the Master's program.
  - For Master's programs with professional orientation only, an applicant with an undergraduate cumulative GPA less than 3.0 but with relevant work experience factored into the calculation of the GPA to become equal or higher than 2.5. Such a student must meet the following requirements during the period of conditional admission or be subject to dismissal:
    - (a) May take a maximum of nine (9) credits hours in the first semester of study;
    - (b) Must achieve an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the first 9 credit hours of credit-bearing courses studied in the Master's program.
- (v) A minimum IELTS score of 4.0 or equivalent is required for admission into a Master's Program whose language of instruction is Arabic.
- b) Individual Master's Programs with professional orientation may include specific provisions for factoring relevant work experience and professional certifications into the calculation of the GPA for conditional acceptance. These provisions must be approved by the Academic Council.
- c) A complete application package must include the following:
- (i) Completed application form;
  - (ii) The deposit slip of the required non-refundable application fee, as relevant to the program, deposited in the University's bank account;
  - (iii) Identity documents as required for Emirati students (copy of passport and Khulasat Al-Qaid) and international students (copy of passport);
  - (iv) Two certified copies of official transcripts from all Colleges or universities attended (the applicant must arrange for these to be sent directly to the Office of Enrollment);

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- (v) An official copy of the applicant's IELTS certificate or equivalent (the applicant must arrange for this to be sent directly to the Office of Enrollment);
  - (vi) Recommendation letters as required by the individual programs; and
- d) Application deadlines for the various Master's Programs will be set annually by the Graduate Studies Council and announced on the UAEU website. Consideration of incomplete application packages may begin at the time of submission, but a decision to admit an applicant can only occur when the application file is complete.

### 3. General Academic Requirements for Master's Programs

- a) The student, in consultation with the Academic Advisor, will prepare a plan of study that must be approved by the Coordinator of the Master's Program and the Assistant Dean. The plan must be prepared and submitted during the student's first semester in the program. The Assistant Dean will file the approved plan with the CGS.
- b) A plan of study will:
  - (i) Be relevant to the student's chosen field and the student's need for preparation, as determined by the student's Advisor or, if applicable, Advisory Committee;
  - (ii) Specify the general field of interest in which the student proposes to conduct major research;
  - (iii) List appropriate courses, the language/s in which proficiency is to be established and the method/s by which proficiency is to be met; and
  - (iv) Set out how the plan meets the requirements of the concerned Program, Department, and College.
- c) Master's students must complete all degree requirements within eight (8) semesters after matriculation, excluding authorized leaves of absence.
- d) Except as stated in Section (4) below, Master's students must register in graduate level courses.
- e) All continuing students must self-register through the on-line e-Services at the UAEU portal.
- f) Newly admitted students must register at the beginning of each semester during the period specified in the academic calendar. If newly admitted students are not registered at the start of the semester in which they have been admitted, their admission will be valid only for the following semester.

### 4. Enrollment in Undergraduate Courses

- a) With the prior approval of the student's Master's Advisor and the Coordinator of the Master's Program, Master's students may enroll in undergraduate courses for purposes of supplemental preparation that complements their approved study plan.
- b) Such enrollments are limited to a maximum of four (4) courses not to exceed a total of 12 credit hours; graduate tuition charges apply. Such courses will appear on the student's transcript. Only high-level undergraduate courses that are designated for both undergraduate and graduate levels may be counted toward full-time enrollment

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status, and a maximum of six (6) such credits can be accepted as courses (typically, Electives) in the student's Master's program.

## 5. Requirements for Completion of Master's Degree Programs

The CGS recognizes two principal paths, known as Plan I (Thesis) and Plan II (Non-Thesis), which lead to the award of the Master's Degree. Programs may be designed to have one or both paths, and students are entitled to make a choice where this is available and one path best suits their needs.

- a) Plan I requires the completion, in good academic standing, of at least 24 credit hours of appropriate graduate course work, plus the presentation and successful defense of an acceptable thesis embodying the results of original research or creative work determined to be worth at least six (6) credit hours.
- b) Plan II requires a minimum of 30 credit hours of appropriate graduate course work, completed in good academic standing. Although thesis research is not required as part of a Plan II plan of study, the student is often expected to gain insight into the techniques of identifying and solving problems, and to use this insight to prepare written reports as part of the workload of some of the courses.
- c) Where both Plan I and II are available within one Master's Program, an early and meaningful choice will be made by the student, in consultation with the Master Program's Advisor(s). A change in choice of plan must be approved by the Coordinator of the Master's Program.

## 6. Additional Program Requirements

- a) In consultation with the concerned Master's Advisor(s), the Coordinator of the Master's Program may require individual students to complete additional courses or requirements according to their needs for preparation. Such requirements become conditions for the completion of the degree.
- b) The program may also adopt a system of examinations that the student must pass at various points in the program.
- c) Such additional degree requirements must be included in the student's approved plan of study.

## 7. Application for Degree

- a) Each Master's Degree candidate must signify the intention to complete the requirements by the next available graduation date, by submitting a completed "Application for Degree" Form. Because this Form is used to check completion of requirements, order the Diploma, and enter the student in the commencement program, the Form must be received in the Office of the Registrar by no later than four (4) weeks into the academic term of expected graduation.
- b) Normally, students must have an active registration in the academic semester in which they plan to graduate.

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## 8. Thesis

The thesis required under Plan I will present scholarly or creative work produced by the candidate. The document will also demonstrate the candidate's familiarity with the literature of the field. If it is a work of scholarly rather than creative nature, it will reflect the student's reasoned selection and careful execution of research methodology. If the thesis is based on empirical research, it will show the student's ability to analyze and interpret research data. The physical form of the thesis must comply with the regulations stated in *Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Guidelines* published by the CGS.

## 9. Final Examination and Thesis Defense

- a) Under Plan I, the final examination will take the form of a presentation and defense of the thesis. The Assistant Dean of the concerned College will schedule the Final Examination, in consultation with the CGS. The defense part of the session must be open to all interested parties, will be publicized on campus by the CGS, and take place at least 20 working days before the end of the semester of graduation. The candidate must have an active registration during the semester in which the final examination is taken.
- b) The Thesis Defense Committee will consist of the student's Advisor, who will chair the Committee, and two other faculty members, one of whom must hold a position outside the UAEU. A qualified member of the relevant industry may be added as a fourth member of the Committee. These members are selected upon the recommendation of the Master's Advisor, and approved by the Coordinator of the Master's Program and the College Dean.
- c) The member from outside the UAEU will be invited to the thesis defense, with the respective Department/College covering travel (normally in economy class), accommodation, and an honorarium. If unable to attend, he/she will send a written report containing the evaluation to the Chair of the Committee prior to the thesis defense, and is encouraged to participate through videoconference. The Chair will share the external member's report with the Committee.
- d) Immediately after the presentation, the Thesis Defense Committee will convene in a closed meeting to deliberate the student's thesis and overall performance. It will then prepare and submit, on a form provided by the CGS, a report stating the outcome of the examination, as well as the Committee's recommendation to the Master's Program Coordinator. The Master's Program Coordinator will submit copies of the report to the Assistant Dean and to the Dean of the CGS. Based on the outcome, the Master's Program Coordinator will also submit the relevant grade to the Registrar.
- e) The recommendation concerning the thesis will be made by a majority vote of the thesis defense committee members and show one of the following:
  - (i) Recommendation to approve the thesis;
  - (ii) Recommendation to approve the thesis after minor modification and verification by the Master's Thesis Advisor. Submission of modified thesis to Advisor must be within 5 working days of being informed of the decision;
  - (iii) Revision of the thesis according to stated guidance, and resubmission for discussion by the Thesis Defense Committee within a period of not less than three months; or

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(iv) Rejection of the thesis and academic dismissal of the candidate from the Master's Program. The student may file a written appeal to the Dean of the CGS within 5 working days from the date of being informed of the decision.

- f) Within three working days of the thesis defense, the Chair of the Thesis Defense Committee will notify the student in writing of its recommendations and, where applicable, any reason/s for rejection of the thesis. In cases where resubmission is required, at least two-thirds of the original members of the Thesis Defense Committee must examine the revised thesis. The Thesis Defense Committee will decide by a two-thirds majority vote whether to recommend approval of thesis, or to regard the student as failed and recommend academic dismissal.
- g) The CGS is responsible for ensuring that the final version of the thesis meets the standards required of a permanent, published document. After the student successfully passes the final thesis examination, the candidate submits to the CGS one error-free, unbound copy of the thesis. This copy will be examined carefully, and the CGS reserves the right to require changes to bring the document up to the standards stated in the *Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Guidelines*.
- h) After making these final changes, the candidate must submit to the CGS an electronic (.pdf) version as well as the required number of copies of the approved thesis. These copies must be received no later than 10 working days before the due date for grades for the semester as set by the Registrar's Office.
- i) The bound copies of the thesis to be distributed as follows:
- (i) One copy to each Thesis Defense Committee member;
  - (ii) One copy to the student's Department;
  - (iii) One copy to the CGS; and
  - (iv) Two copies to the University Library.
- j) Students who fail to submit a completed thesis within one semester following the thesis defense will be charged a degree completion fee, which is set in advance by the Office of Enrollment, for each semester in which they fail to submit the thesis. Failure to resubmit within two academic semesters leads to dismissal. Any exceptions to this rule must be requested by the student in advance of the deadline through the Master's Program Coordinator, and be approved by the concerned Assistant Dean and the Dean of the CGS.

## 10. Recommendation for Degree

Successful candidates will be recommended for the Master's Degree by the Dean of the College to the Enrollment Deanship, with a copy sent to the CGS, by no later than the date when the semester grades are due to the Registrar's Office (as listed in the University Academic Calendar). Candidates must be in good academic standing to graduate, with no temporary grades ("I" or "N") for courses required for the degree on their transcripts. The Enrollment Office will verify that the student has met all degree requirements and will proceed with the procedure to clear and approve the student for the award of the Master's degree.