

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Master's Programs Handbook
July 2014

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Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Master's Program Handbook

M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction

University of Wisconsin-Madison

July 2014

This *Master's Program Handbook*, although not an official publication of the Graduate School, has been developed by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Committee (GPC) as a guide for prospective, entering, and continuing master's degree candidates in this department. The handbook describes the M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction, current policies of the department with regard to admission, course-load requirements, transfer of graduate course credit, program requirements, minimum standards for satisfactory progress toward the degree, the Master's Examination, and *areas of study*. The information herein reflects current policies of the department and the Graduate School; and these are subject to change. Specific questions and concerns regarding the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program can be addressed to the Graduate Program Coordinator in person (Ms. Deidre Vincevneus, Room 210-C Teacher Education Building), by phone at 1-608-263-7466, by email at curric@education.wisc.edu.

Applicants and graduate students are responsible for reading and following these departmental policies. They should also consult The Graduate School's current *Academic Policies and Procedures* <<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>>, which includes official statements of Graduate School regulations with which both students and departments must conform. Additional information may also be obtained from faculty advisors, the departmental Graduate Program Office, and The Graduate School. Every Master's degree student must have a faculty advisor, whose recommendations supplement departmental and Graduate School requirements.

I. MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

Graduate study in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction is distinguished from undergraduate study in its depth of subject matter and its more intense consideration of professional problems and issues. At the master's degree level, graduate study focuses upon the student's more immediate goals of professional growth and development and in certain specialties may lead to advanced certification.

M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction

The Master of Science with a major in Curriculum and Instruction is primarily meant for applicants who have previously completed a teacher-certification program in early childhood, elementary, or secondary education. Each graduate student must concentrate in one of the department's *areas of study*, which are listed on page 14. Some *areas of study* in the department make exceptions to the expectation of teacher certification when an applicant has other types of background knowledge that are relevant to the specialty and when the likely career of the applicant will not depend on teacher certification. The M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction program is intended for the student who wishes to devote a substantial portion of graduate study to course work in professional education. Applicants to this program should specify "Curriculum and Instruction" as their intended graduate major.

Beginning in Fall 2014, in addition to meeting the usual admission requirements and removing any deficiencies, the student must, under the direction of a faculty advisor, complete a minimum of 30 credits of graduate work **not to include research/thesis credits** (272-990) with a grade point average of at least 3.25. Of these, there must be at least 15 credits in graduate-level Curriculum and Instruction courses **other than Independent Reading** (272-699/999). Credits earned in undergraduate or graduate courses to remove deficiencies do not count toward this 30-credit minimum. (Students who began their master's program before Fall 2014 and who are continuously enrolled, are grandfathered in to the 24 cr. master's degree, as long as they complete their MS before Fall 2016.)

The student is also obliged to satisfy: (1) Graduate School requirements; (2) the Department's Master's Project requirement; (3) any additional requirements specified by the student's *area of study*; and (4) the Master's Exam requirement.

II. ADMISSION

Prospective Master's degree students must meet the admission criteria of the Graduate School, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and the faculty in the applicant's intended area of study. A list of the department's areas of study appears on page 14. More

specific details about each area of study can be found on the C&I website, <http://ci.education.wisc.edu>. Consideration for admission requires a completed Graduate School Online Application <<https://www.gradsch.wisc.edu/eapp/eapp.pl>>. Additional materials, described below under “Requirements for Consideration,” must be sent directly to the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Office. Specific questions concerning application to the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program can be addressed to the Graduate Program Coordinator by phone at 1-608-263-7466, by email at vincevineus@wisc.edu or curric@education.wisc.edu.

A. *Requirements for Consideration*

To be considered for admission to the Graduate School and any of the Master's degree programs in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, applicants must meet an assortment of requirements, which are described below.

1. *Completion of the Graduate School Online Application.* To be considered for admission, applicants must submit the Graduate School Online Application: <<https://www.gradsch.wisc.edu/eapp/eapp.pl>>, and pay the application fee.

Applicants should include in their online application a detailed Statement of Reasons for graduate study. Before they submit this statement, we strongly suggest that applicants peruse the descriptions of our graduate program's *Areas of Study*. The statement of reasons should indicate the applicant's primary interest, the applicant's likely *area of study* in the department, professional objectives and career goals, and why the applicant is interested in pursuing a master's degree in this department. This statement will be helpful in identifying a faculty member who may serve as a student's graduate advisor; faculty read it carefully when deciding whether to support an applicant's admittance.

2. *Observance of application deadlines.* All materials supporting an application must be submitted to the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Office by established department **deadlines**, which are listed on the C&I website. Presently, the domestic-applicant deadline for fall-semester admission as a master's degree student is the preceding June 30; for spring-semester admission, the preceding November 30; and, for summer-session admission, the preceding April 30. The international-applicant deadline for fall-semester admission as a master's degree student is the preceding March 30; for spring-semester admission, the preceding August 30; and, for summer-session admission, the preceding January 30.
3. *A bachelor's degree from an approved institution.*
4. *An undergraduate major or equivalent evidence of suitable background for entering the proposed field of graduate study.* Satisfactory completion of a teacher certification program normally meets this requirement of the department. Applicants to certain areas

of study within the department can be admitted without teacher certification, but they are required to have taken at least 12 credits in *professional education courses*. Applicants whose records fail to include these credits in professional education may qualify for "**admission with deficiencies**," which is described with more detail under the heading of *Possible Application Outcomes*.

5. *Two **official** transcripts of **all** previous collegiate work sent to the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Office (**not** The Graduate School).* Both official copies of each transcript must be delivered to the Curriculum & Instruction Graduate Program Office, 225 N Mills St., Madison, WI 53706.
6. *An undergraduate grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 (4.00 basis) on the last 60 credits.* Credits and GPAs corresponding to UW-Madison's grading system are calculated here. Interpretation of academic records from other countries is informed by the Graduate School's and the department's extensive experience with international students.

Master's degree applicants whose undergraduate GPA is less than 3.00 must take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) general test <<http://www.gre.org/>> and have an official report of the scores sent electronically from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to UW-Madison (institution code: 1846).
7. *Three letters of recommendation.* All Master's degree applications must be supported by written recommendations from three (3) persons qualified to judge the potential of the applicant as a graduate student. Recommendations can be submitted electronically through the Graduate School's on-line application, or printed recommendations can be mailed to the Curriculum & Instruction Graduate Program Office, 225 N. Mills, Madison, WI 53706.
8. *Résumé or curriculum vitae.* Each applicant is required to submit a résumé or curriculum vitae that gives a brief account of education to date, previous occupations, and accomplishments.
9. *Additional requirement for international applicants.* International applicants whose native language is not English must furnish recent (not older than two years) results of a *Test of English as a Foreign Language* (TOEFL) <<http://www.toefl.org/>>, the *International English Language Testing System* (IELTS) <<http://www.ielts.org/>>, or the *Michigan English Language Assessment Battery* (MELAB) <<http://www.cambridgemichigan.org/melab/>>. A score of at least **92** on TOEFL's Internet-Based Test (IBT), **7** on the IELTS, or **82** on the MELAB is expected by both the department and the Graduate School. Applicants with a lower score are sometimes admitted; this, however, is a rare event because prospective advisors, the Graduate Program Committee, the department faculty, and the Graduate School must all concur for it to happen. The Department requires that any student who obtained a TOEFL Total Score less than 92 or a TOEFL subtest score less than 21 take **upon arrival** the *English*

as a Second Language Assessment Test (ESLAT), <<https://english.wisc.edu/esl/international-students-placement.htm>>, which is administered by UW-Madison's Program in English as a Second Language (ESL) <<http://www.english.wisc.edu/esl/>>. If the Program in English as a Second Language then recommends enrollment in specific ESL courses, the student must enroll in the recommended courses in order to be considered by the department to be making *minimal satisfactory progress*.

Possible Application Outcomes

Admittance for Master's degree study involves acceptance by faculty from an area of study (p.14) within the department that matches the student's interest, willingness of a faculty member affiliated with that area of study to serve as the graduate advisor, review by the Graduate Program, and concurrence of the Graduate School. The process can result in several possible outcomes, which are described below.

1. *Admit with full standing.*
2. *Admit with deficiencies.* A professional background in education (typically, as a certified teacher) is a prerequisite for most areas of study in the department. Applicants to certain areas of study within the department are sometimes admitted without teacher certification, but they are nevertheless required to have taken at least 12 credits in *professional education courses*. Equivalent courses taught outside a school of education are permissible, so long as an expressed focus on professional education is evident. At least 6 credits must be in foundations of education (e.g., educational anthropology, educational sociology, history of education, human development, human learning, philosophy of education). Applicants lacking this background may be admitted with deficiencies and will be required to take a specified number of credits in the areas of deficiency, in addition to the course work ordinarily required in the graduate program. Courses taken to remove deficiencies should be chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor, and each of these courses must be taken for a letter grade (not Pass-Fail). These courses may be carried concurrently with regular graduate courses; but, being additional requirements, they cannot be used to satisfy requirements of the graduate program.
3. *Admit on probation.* Students who are admitted on probation are expected to attain a 3.50 GPA on the first nine (9) credits of on-campus graduate-level courses, at which time they are automatically removed from probation.
4. *Refuse admission.* An applicant may be refused for any of a variety of reasons including but not limited to: low grades, poor writing, low test scores, low facility in English, deficiencies, lack of space in the intended area of focus, an intended focus incompatible with either the mission of the department or the strength of

current faculty, lack of student funds, or lack of departmental funds. An applicant who is refused admission will be informed, by letter, of the reasons for refusal.

III. MINIMUM CREDIT, ENROLLMENT, AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The following is a summary of Graduate School and Curriculum & Instruction Master's requirements.

A. Credit and Course-Level Requirement

Beginning in Fall 2014, all Master's degree programs in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction require a minimum of 30 credits of graduate work, not including credits earned through research/thesis credits (272-990). Of these, there must be at least 15 credits in graduate-level courses **other than Independent Reading** (272-699/999) in the UW-Madison Department of Curriculum and Instruction. As of Fall 2013, Master's students are encouraged, but not required, to enroll in a 3 credit introductory course during their first or second semesters. At this time, the course is titled, "Introduction to Curriculum & Instruction: Research & Resources." To qualify as graduate-level work, courses in Curriculum and Instruction must be numbered 500 or above; with the graduate advisor's consent, courses taken in other UW-Madison departments may be numbered as low as 300 as long as they are defined as graduate level by the courses' subjects owners. Credits earned to remove deficiencies do not count toward this 30-credit minimum.

B. Course Load

The normal graduate course load is 8-15 credits during an academic-year semester. During the eight-week summer session, when enrollment is optional, the normal graduate course load is 4-12 credits. A student may register for less than the normal course load but may not enroll for more than 12 credits in any semester or 12 credits in a summer session without first obtaining prior, written approval from the Graduate School to carry an overload. To enroll for more than the maximum credit load, a student must provide a persuasive academic rationale on the *Credit Overload Request* form <<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>>, obtain his or her advisor's signature, and submit the completed form to the Graduate School Office of Admissions and Academic Services, 217 Bascom Hall. If the Graduate School approves the overload, the student will then be allowed to add the course.

Holders of research assistantships, fellowships, and scholarships supported by the Graduate School are required to carry a full program of graduate studies during their appointment. Teaching or project assistants employed by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction are also required to carry a full course load and obtain satisfactory grades.

IV. TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDIT

- A. Conditions under which course work may (and may not) be transferred.

Beginning in fall 2014, the department's minimum for the Master's degree is 30 credits. A limited amount of previous graduate-level course work taken after completion of an undergraduate degree may be counted toward the department's 30-course-credit minimum for the M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction, subject to restrictions specified here. Only graduate-level courses other than independent reading may be counted for this purpose, and those must be recommended by the student's graduate advisor. Up to 9 credits may be allowed if all of the credits were taken from UW-Madison's Department of Curriculum and Instruction as a special student, those credits are converted to graduate credit and the difference in credit price paid. A student's advisor and the department must approve of those courses being accepted and converted. A maximum of 3 credits awarded by the American Council of Education (ACE) to National Board Certified Teachers may be counted for this purpose. Extension courses offered through institutions other than the University of Wisconsin-Madison may not be used to satisfy department requirements.

- B. Procedure for departmental acceptance of prior work for **program credit only**.

A minimum of 21 credits of the 30 credits required must be taken as a graduate student at UW Madison. Subject to the procedure described here, the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program may accept up to 9 credits of work completed at another institution toward fulfillment of departmental or area-of-study requirements. The C&I Graduate Program's acceptance of such work will not appear on a UW-Madison transcript. To initiate a departmental action of this kind, a student's advisor should address a request to the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Office to accept graduate work from another institution for "**program credit only**." This request should include a transcript with the course(s) listed and a syllabus of each course. It is the responsibility of the advisor to verify that the course was a graduate course, and that the course is appropriate to the student's current program.

V. ON-CAMPUS TRANSFER OF GRADUATE STATUS

An admitted, matriculated graduate student presently studying in another UW-Madison department may seek admission to a master's degree program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. To do this, the student must:

1. Complete a "Change of Major" form found on the Graduate School website, <https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>.
2. Obtain a written recommendation from a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction with whom the student has already conferred regarding his/her proposed change of major.

Prior admission to a Master's program in another UW-Madison department does not guarantee admission as a graduate student to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. All credentials must be processed and evaluated according to the established criteria and procedures for admission to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, as described elsewhere in this handbook.

Graduate courses already satisfactorily completed as part of a graduate program in another UW-Madison department do not automatically count toward a transferred student's program requirements in C&I. Such courses must first be evaluated by faculty from the student's intended program in C&I.

VI. CRITERIA FOR MINIMAL SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

An applicant who has been accepted by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction as Master's degree student is required to satisfy the minimum criteria listed below. The student who does not maintain minimal acceptable performance as defined by the criteria will be so informed and may have his/her enrollment terminated. Any student whose progress has been declared unsatisfactory can appeal to the Graduate Program Committee for reconsideration of his/her status. Progress beyond the minimal criteria will be evaluated by the student's advisor and other professors assigned to the student's committee.

1. The student must have an advisor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. An initial advisor is assigned upon admission. If a student wants to change advisors, s/he must fund a new advisor herself/himself.
2. For its GPA requirement, Graduate School requires graduate students to maintain a grade-point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) for graduate-level courses. However, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction requires that its graduate students maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.25 in graduate courses completed at the University of Wisconsin- Madison for credit toward the graduate degree. If the student's grade-point average falls below 3.25, the student shall have the next term in which he or she is enrolled to raise the average to the minimum satisfactory level. If the GPA is not raised at least to 3.25 in that term, the student's progress will be considered unsatisfactory. In calculating GPA to gauge

whether C&I's 3.25 minimum has been reached, the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program will consider grades of "P" or "S" to be equivalent to a B.

3. *Grades of Incomplete.* The Graduate School considers a student to be making unsatisfactory progress whenever an incomplete has not been removed by the end of the next academic-year semester during which the student enrolls. If a graduate student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction has 6 or more credits of incomplete that have not been removed in this time frame, the department will block the student's future enrollment by placing a hold on registration. This departmental hold on registration will be lifted when all of the incompletes have been removed. Exceptions require a written and date-specific plan from the student, a written appeal from the student's advisor, and approval by the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Chair.
4. *Eight-year time limit.* The departmental time-limit for completion of all requirements for the Master's degree is eight years after graduate admission, and a student who fails to complete the Master's degree within this time limit is considered *to be making unsatisfactory progress*. These students may not take the Final Master's Examination until their program has been reviewed by their advisor and the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Committee. One potential outcome of this review is termination for failure to make satisfactory progress. Another potential outcome is a stipulation that the student's program be updated with additional courses.
5. *Long absence.* According to Graduate School policy, Master's degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they had earned before their absence. Although their major department may count the course work students did before their absence for meeting its requirements, the Graduate School does not count that work toward the Graduate School's 16-credit minimum credit requirement. Also, if students have been absent for five or more years, they must file a new Graduate School application for admission and submit it with a new application fee. With regard to the department's 30-credit minimum, a Master's degree student who has been absent for five or more consecutive years may not count work done prior to the absence toward departmental requirements. A student's program may appeal this time limit through a written request to the G.S. Office of Admissions and Academic Services.

VII. MASTER'S PROJECT/THESIS

An important aspect of pursuing a Master's degree is meaningful association between the student and professors. This objective is usually attained during that period of time when the student works independently, but in close association with a professor or a thesis committee, to complete the Master's Project. The rich environment of research and scholarly writing within the department provides all students with opportunities to come in contact with substantive issues

that are appropriate for investigation. Therefore, to be awarded a Master's degree from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, a student needs to identify, analyze, appraise, synthesize, and report a problem of scholarly significance.

The Master's Project is usually accomplished through preparation of a Master's paper, thesis, or substantial study project. While the Master's Project is usually completed under the supervision of the student's advisor, it may be completed under the supervision of another professor with the approval of the advisor. If the professor supervising the student's master's paper or thesis so desires, a bound copy of the work must be submitted to the professor prior to certification of its completion.

VIII. MASTER'S EXAMINATION

A student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction will be considered eligible to take the master's examination when: (1) all incomplete grades have been removed from the record; (2) all deficiencies have been removed; (3) the advisor reports that the student will have completed all course and program requirements by the end of the semester or summer session during which the examination will be taken; and (4) at least three weeks prior to the examination date, the student has filed the following, completed items with the Graduate Program Office: (a) both pages of the *Application for the Master's Examination*, (b) the *Master's Degree Warrant Request Form*, and (c) *Plans for Continuation of Graduate Study*.

If a student is having a written Master's exam, the examination questions are prepared by a committee of three faculty members of professional rank, at least two of whom shall be from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

The chair of the committee is a specialist in the student's area of concentration and may be the student's advisor. Based on consultation with the student, the advisor will decide which of the following options is used.

There are three options for the master's examination:

1. a four-hour written examination.
2. a one-week take-home examination.
3. a 1½ - 2 hour oral exam. **This option is available to students whose master's project/thesis is written and has been read and approved by the three members of the examining committee.**

Responsibilities of the chair of any examination committee include:

1. Identify other faculty members to constitute the three-person exam committee. The willingness of faculty to serve on a committee

should be verified by the exam committee chair before submitting their names to the Graduate Program Committee Office.

2. If the examination is written, prepare, with the assistance of other committee members, the examination questions and submit these to the Graduate Program Committee Office well in advance of the scheduled date of the examination.
3. If the examination is oral, request at least two other faculty members to fill out master's examination evaluation sheets at the end of the oral examination; also, obtain signatures on the master's examination warrant from all faculty who were involved in the oral examination.
4. Summarize the results of the examination committee's independent evaluations and return the evaluation sheets to the Graduate Program Office. At least two of the three committee members must rate the examination as "pass". In doubtful cases, the chair may: (a) convene the committee to arrive at a decision; (b) ask a fourth reader to rate the examination; or (c) schedule an additional oral examination with the student.

In the event a student fails the Master's Examination, the student may have one additional opportunity to pass it. Before a student retakes the Master's Examination, the examining committee may require the student to complete additional credits in courses to be determined by the student's advisor.

Submission of the (orange) Brief Abstract card. As a final step, Master's students who have passed the Master's Examination are required to complete and file the orange *Brief Abstract* card for their Master's Project/Thesis with the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program Office. The Graduate Program Office supplies this card as part of the packet that it gives to Master's Examination applicants. Because a signed warrant indicates that all departmental degree requirements have been met, the Graduate Program Office will not transmit a signed warrant to the Graduate School until it receives a completed *Brief Abstract* card from the student.

IX. SUMMARY

In summary, the student must successfully complete the following steps to qualify for the Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

- A. Be admitted to a Master's degree program in the department.
- B. Obtain an advisor with whom a program of courses is planned that is consistent with the area of study to which the student has been admitted.
- C. As of fall 2014, complete a minimum of 30 graduate credits in accord with requirements and time limits detailed earlier in this handbook. These credits must include at least 21 graduate credits on the Madison campus.
- D. Complete the required Master's Project/ Thesis.
- E. At least three weeks before the Master's Examination date, submit the completed *paperwork packet for the Master's Examination*.
- F. Take and pass the Master's Examination.
- G. Submit a filled-in *Brief Abstract* of the Master's Project/ Thesis.

X. MASTER'S DEGREE AREAS OF STUDY

Curriculum Studies & Global Studies

Digital Media

Disciplinary Studies

Mathematics

Music

Science

Social Studies

Language & Literacies

English as a Second Language

Bilingual Education

World Language Education

Multicultural Education

Teacher Education

Childhood Studies

XI. LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN C&I's GRADUATE PROGRAM OFFICE

1. *Form Certifying Completion of Master's Project*
2. *Abstract Card for the Master's Project*
3. *Application for the Master's Examination*
4. *Change of Advisor Agreement Form*

XII. LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS AVAILABLE ONLINE FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

1. *Graduate School Academic Programs:*
<https://grad.wisc.edu/prospective/academicprograms/>
2. *Application for Reentry (Previously Enrolled Graduate Students)*
<https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/process/>
3. *Expecting Your Master's Degree? Procedures to Help*
<https://www.grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/mastersproc/>