4.11 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS*

*The Graduate School reserves the right to change any provision or requirement at any time in order to fulfill its educational mission and exercise its educational responsibility. Refer to the website for master's and doctoral degree program checklists and the academic forms for additional information.

The general requirements for advanced degrees are set out below. Special divisional (i.e., college and school) and departmental requirements are given in the sections dealing with the respective divisions and departments. Each student must assume full responsibility for understanding both the general and special requirements of the division and department in which he or she pursues his or her major work.

4.11.1 Master's Degrees
4.11.2 Educational Specialist Degrees
4.11.3 Doctoral Degrees

4.11.1 MASTER'S DEGREES

Program Requirements
Two plans are offered for the master's degree:

Plan I. Candidates for the master's degree under Plan I must earn a minimum of 24 semester hours of credit in coursework and write a thesis (a minimum of 6 semester hours of thesis research required).

Plan II. Candidates for the master's degree under Plan II must earn a minimum of 30 semester hours of credit and complete a culminating or “capstone experience” as described under the Comprehensive Examinations section below.

Both plans require a minimum of 18 semester hours in the major subject. With the approval of the major department, the remainder of the coursework may be completed in either the major or a related field.

In some divisions and in many departments of the University, candidates are required to do their work under Plan I. Candidates working under Plan II may be required to participate successfully in seminar or problem courses that will give them an acquaintance with the methods of research and an appreciation of the place and function of original investigation in the field.

Residency Requirements
A student's program at the master's level must provide sufficient association with the resident faculty to permit individual evaluation of the student's capabilities and achievements.

Transfer of Credit
Courses of full graduate-level credit earned in a regionally accredited institution where a student was enrolled in the graduate school may be submitted for review for inclusion in a degree program. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until after the student has enrolled in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Acceptance of credit requires the approval of the student's advisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School. Credit will not be accepted for transfer from any institution at which the student failed to achieve a "B" average on all graduate work attempted. Only courses in which a student earned a "B" grade or better may be transferred.

A student initiates in the Office of the Graduate School the request for evaluation of graduate credit obtained at another institution. It is also the student's responsibility to assure that the
Graduate School receives an official transcript of the credit concerned, well in advance of the final semester and typically before or at the time of advancement to candidacy.

With the approval of the student's department and the dean of the Graduate School, the greater of 12 hours or 25 percent of the required coursework for a graduate degree may be transferred from another institution. All credit toward the master's degree, including transfer credit, must have been earned during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded.

In some cases, foreign educational credentials may not meet the Graduate School's criteria for transfer of credit. It may be necessary for students in this situation to secure an evaluation of their credentials from World Education Services Inc. (WES), an external foreign credential evaluation service. Additional information on their services can be found at their website.

400-Level Courses
A maximum of 6 semester hours of 400-level course credit may be accepted for a master's degree program, but only if a form for Approval of 400-Level Course Work for Master's Credit is approved by the Graduate School prior to the semester in which the 400-level coursework will be taken.

Time Limit
All requirements for the master's degree must be completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. There is no provision for an extension of the time limit beyond 6 years for master's students.

Admission to Candidacy
Admission to the Graduate School does not imply admission of a student to candidacy for a degree. Admission to candidacy is contingent upon the recommendation of the student's department and the approval of the graduate dean, after the student has met the formal requirements for candidacy listed below and demonstrated sufficient preparation to pursue the graduate study and research required for the degree sought.

The application for Admission to Candidacy for the master's degree should be filed after 12 semester hours of graduate credit have been earned at The University of Alabama. It must be approved by the time of registration for the semester in which requirements for the degree are completed. Approval will depend on (a) the quality of the applicant's graduate work prior to the time the application is made (see Scholastic Requirements); (b) the removal of any special conditions; and (c) the certification of the major department or school that the student is well qualified to continue work toward a degree.

Thesis
A thesis evidencing research capacity, independent thought, and the ability to interpret materials is required of all master's degree candidates who pursue Plan I. The subject chosen must be in the major field and must be approved by the graduate committee of the major department or school and by the head of the student's major department or division.

Article Style vs. Journal Format

Article Style.
At the doctoral level, "article-style dissertations" are unified works that include several distinct but related studies of research or creative activity, each of which is of publishable quality. The University does not permit an "article-style thesis" to be presented for a master's degree.

Journal Format.
A "journal-format thesis" is acceptable. Such a thesis follows the format of a particular journal in which the student and advisor want the thesis to be published. To prepare a journal-format thesis, the student uses the journal's "information for authors" or similarly titled guidelines in conjunction with the Graduate School's Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations.

http://graduate.ua.edu/catalog/14800.html