

11.99.99.R0.09 Course Requirements for the Master's and Specialist Degrees



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Procedure Summary

The Graduate Council establishes basic course standards for completion of the master's and specialist degree programs at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

This procedure documents the course requirements for the master's and specialist degree programs.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 A minimum of thirty semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree is required for the master's and specialist degrees. A minimum of two-thirds of the hours required in a program must be earned from A&M-Commerce. University degree requirements are listed under the master's and specialist degree section of the Graduate Catalog.
- 2 Graduate students enrolled in cross-listed courses that are offered for both undergraduate and graduate credit are expected to complete requirements beyond those expected of undergraduate students.
- 3 Upon approval by the student's major or minor advisor, the instructor of the course, the department head in which the major is being pursued, and, in the event the course is offered outside the major, the department in which the course is offered, and the Dean of the Graduate School, up to two 300- or 400-level courses (six semester hours) taken for graduate credit may be used to fulfill master's or specialist graduate course degree requirements.
 - 3.1. The instructor of the 300- or 400-level course must have graduate faculty status.
 - 3.2. A student taking a 300- or 400-level course for graduate credit will be required to complete additional work beyond the normal course work requirements at a level commensurate with the quality and quantity of work which distinguishes graduate instruction.

- 3.3. In addition, the graduate syllabus must include clearly identifiable evidence of substantially greater expectations/requirements and student learning outcomes which operate at a higher order of thinking appropriate for graduate students.
- 3.4. The form to be executed in order to obtain approval to take an undergraduate course for graduate credit is available on the Graduate School website and must be submitted before enrollment in the course(s).
4. No more than twelve hours accumulated while the student is classified as a non-degree student can be applied to a master's/specialist graduate degree. At the discretion of the department, students may apply up to, but no more than, eighteen hours accumulated while classified as having certification status (i.e., working toward a state or professionally mandated certification) to the master's/specialist degrees.
5. Prerequisites. Admission to the Graduate School does not imply that the applicant has the necessary background to earn a degree in a specific program. In order to major or minor in a subject field, the candidate must meet departmental prerequisites. Background courses cannot be applied toward a master's/specialist major or minor.
6. Major. All master's and specialist programs require a major of at least eighteen semester hours, including hours in a graduate level research component course (595) or thesis (518). Specific programs may require additional semester hours for a major. (Specific program requirements are listed under each departmental section of the Graduate Catalog.)
7. Minor. A minimum of twelve semester hours in a second subject area constitutes a minor. Completion of a minor is not required to complete a master's/specialist degree program.
8. Electives. Up to eighteen hours in approved additional fields may be used as electives.
9. Research Component. All degree programs require the satisfactory completion of a research component; thesis (518) or research component course (595).
 - 9.1 Option I: 518. Thesis is a significant work based on an original idea that makes a creative contribution to and advances knowledge in the student's areas of interest and expertise. It is designed to provide a culminating experience to the master's and specialist degree.
 - 9.1.1 All degree programs involving a thesis require the satisfactory completion of six (6) semester credit hours of the 518 course. Credit for no more and no less than six (6) semester credit hours of 518 is required in a degree program and is awarded only upon satisfactory completion of all degree requirements.

Unless approved by the department head or director of school or program coordinator, the 518 course must be taken in the department/school of the major field of study.

- 9.1.2 All thesis involving research compliance areas (human subjects, animal subjects, export control, or biological agents) must be in compliance with university procedures regarding the specific research compliance area.
- 9.2 Option II: 595. The required course shall carry the course number, 595, but the title, as long as it conveys the research component, may vary from program to program.
- 9.2.1 No more and no less than three semester credit hours of the 595 course is required for all non-thesis master's and specialist degree programs.
 - 9.2.2 The department offering the 595 course has autonomy in its organization and instructional operation; however, completion of the course will be evidenced by a product that shall be available for reference in the department for a minimum of three years.
 - 9.2.3 All 595 research components involving research compliance areas (human subjects, animal subjects, export controls, or biohazardous agents) must be in compliance with university procedures regarding the specific research compliance area.
 - 9.2.4 A student must enroll in the 595 course within the major department. Exceptions to this policy must receive written permission from the department head and be filed in the Office of Graduate Studies.
- 10 Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater may be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Otherwise, the limitations stated in the following section apply. Course work in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit. Courses on the student's transcript with grades of D, F, or U may not be absolved by transfer work. Credit for thesis research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any university must be shown in semester credit hours.
- 10.1 Credit for work taken at other regionally accredited graduate schools is granted in accordance with an evaluation by The Graduate School and upon approval by the student's advisory committee and the Dean of the Graduate School; however, under no circumstances will a course with a grade lower than "B" be transferred for credit.

- 10.2 Transfer course content must be in academic areas taught by A&M-Commerce.
 - 10.3 Transfer credit is limited to one-third of the hours required for the master's and specialist programs.
 - 10.4 The course cannot be more than six years old at the time of graduation for the master's and specialist programs. Credit earned over six years prior to graduation will require specific written departmental justification and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School in order to be counted toward a master's/specialist degree. The discipline in which the course(s) was taken shall be involved in the validation of an out-of-date course.
 - 10.5 The credits earned must be clearly at the graduate level.
 - 10.6 Each request for transfer must be evaluated and recommended for course content and what it is equivalent to in the degree program by the Department Head seeking transfer and submitted for approval to the Dean of the Graduate School.
 - 10.7 A student who has already been admitted to a degree program at A&M-Commerce and who wants to take courses at a foreign university as part of a Study Abroad or exchange program to be transferred to A&M-Commerce must receive prior approval from the program head or director.
- 11 Bachelors-to-Master's Degree Pathways and Combination Master's Degrees Pathways. The university allows the opportunity for high-achieving students to count a select number of graduate credits toward a second-degree program and thereby obtain a graduate degree at an accelerated pace. This may include bachelors-to-master's degree pathways or combined master's degree pathways.
 - 11.1 Bachelors-to-Master's Degree Pathways. Graduate courses cannot apply toward an undergraduate degree except when used to fulfill the requirements of a bachelors-to-master's degree pathway. See section 3 above regarding undergraduate seniors taking graduate courses for credit.
 - 11.2 Combination Master's Degrees. A minimum of thirty semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree is required for a master's degree. In the case of a combined master's degree program requiring more than thirty semester hours, only semester hours over the minimum requirement may be used to meet the requirements for the second master's program, up to a maximum of six shared semester hours. The hours for these graduate courses will count toward both degree programs.

- 11.2.1 Courses required for the master's degree program allowed to count toward a second combined degree program must be explicitly identified by the program as part of the degree plan and are selected based on a coherent rationale for being appropriate to satisfy requirements of the second master's degree program.
- 11.2.2 Students allowed to apply hours required for the master's program toward a second master's degree program in a combination degree program must meet the admissions requirements to be accepted into both degree programs.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[University Procedure 11.9999.R0.07 Cross-Listing Graduate Courses](#)

[University Procedure 11.99.99.R0.06 Master's and Specialist Thesis and Advisory Committee](#)

[University Procedure 11.99.99.R0.13 Examinations for Graduate Degrees](#)

[University Procedure 11.99.99.R0.15 Time Limitations for Graduate Programs](#)

[University Procedure 11.99.99.R0.18 Graduate Level Courses by Independent Study](#)

Suspends *University Procedure 11.04.99.R0.15 Course Requirements for the Master's and Specialist Degrees*

Suspends *University Procedure 11.04.99.R0.26 Graduate Level Substitutions of Upper-level Undergraduate Courses.*

Suspends *University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.12 Master and Specialist Degree Research Component*

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