

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Policy and Template for Graduate Group Policies and Procedures

Approve by Graduate Council on October 21, 2014

Last revision approved by Graduate Council on September 28, 2020

All graduate programs must have approved *Policies and Procedures*. Graduate programs may not operate under policies that have not been reviewed and approved by Graduate Council.

General Instructions

Graduate Group *Policies and Procedures* should follow the format provided, beginning with cover page and table of contents. Enumerated headings and subheadings in bold must appear in the *Policies and Procedures* and table of contents. If a particular section does not pertain to a group, it can be so labeled. General rules are as follows:

- Texts in regular style font should remain unchanged as much as possible, as these mostly pertain to policies and regulations. (However, enhancements to make the language more welcoming and encouraging are welcomed.)
- Italicized text in brackets [*like this*] provides guidance. Please delete once actual content is provided.
- A highlighted bracket [*like this*] needs to be replaced with the graduate group's own language.
- An empty, highlighted bracket [] needs to be replaced with a real number.
- Where appropriate, please hyperlink directly to relevant documents, such as the graduate group's bylaws or Graduate Division policies.

Format

Graduate Group *Policies and Procedures* should be prepared as a **Word document** and be formatted according to the layout in the template. For documents developed before October 21, 2014, GC recommends that groups consider adopting the current Graduate Group *Policies and Procedures* template, but at the very least, *groups must have the information that is specifically outlined in the template.*

Submission Instructions

Prior to taking the faculty vote on the *Policies and Procedures*, the program chair should submit the document to the Graduate Council analyst for preliminary review by the analyst and the Policy Subcommittee of the Graduate Council. See the "[Graduate Group P&Ps: Instructions and Review Process](#)" document for further description of the review process.

**[GRADUATE GROUP NAME]
[Ph.D. AND/OR MS/MA] DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

Revised: *[List previous year(s) and current revision date]*

Graduate Council Approval: _____

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and Scope: *[Briefly summarize the aims, focus, and scope of the program, including listing the concentrations within the program and degrees offered.]*

1.2 Admissions Requirements:

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements for admission to graduate study at University of California, Merced, described in the Section II of the [Graduate Student Handbook](#). Admission into **[grad group name]** further requires *[add any requirements specific to the graduate group; if no additional requirements, delete the whole sentence]*.

Admission decisions are made on a case-by case basis. Meeting some or all of these criteria does not guarantee admission, but merely eligibility.

1.2.1 Prerequisites: *[If specific topics of coursework are required as a prerequisite, list them in tabular form.]*

1.2.2 Deficiencies: *[Fill this section only if there are specific topics of coursework that are required as prerequisites in 1.2.1] Coursework deficiencies should be made up by [for example, the end of the first academic year following initial enrollment], by earning a **letter grade** of “B” or better.*

1.3 General Committees: *[Describe the structure and role of all committees that are relevant to the program administration (i.e., not student- or degree-specific committees) in your graduate group. These descriptions must be consistent with the group’s bylaws. FOR EXAMPLE:*

1.3.1 Executive Committee:

1.3.2 Admission Committee:

1.3.3 Education Policy Committee:]

2. Master’s Degree Requirements [SEE [THE INSTRUCTIONS](#) IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST P&P]

2.1 Degree Plan I- Thesis: This plan requires a minimum of **[24, or more]** semester units in approved courses, at least **[20, or more]** of which must be earned in 200-series graduate-level courses exclusive of credit given for thesis research and preparation. A general examination is also required.

2.1.1 Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): *[list all PLOs for Plan I]*

2.1.2 Course Requirements - Core and Electives (total **[] units)**

[Discuss the course requirements. Include a tabular list with the following information:]

2.1.2.1 Core Courses (total **[] units)**

[For example:]

Course Number	Course Name	Units
[GC 200]	Graduate Council- Core	[4]

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2.1.2.2 Elective Courses (total [] units)

[For example:]

Course Number	Course Name	Units
[GC 201]	Graduate Council-Elective	4]

2.1.2.3 Summary: [] units of core coursework and [] units of elective coursework are required for a total of [] units. Full-time students must enroll for 12 units per semester including research, academic and seminar units. [Specify if any courses may be taken S/U, and if so, whether they may be counted to fulfill course requirements.] Per UC regulations, ordinarily students shall not receive credits for more than 12 units of graduate-level (200) courses per semester. [STATE ANY ADDITIONAL RULES ABOUT COURSES HERE. For example: Once course requirements are completed, students can take additional classes as needed, although the 12 units per semester are generally fulfilled with a research class (provide course number) and perhaps seminars.]

2.1.3 Special Requirements: [For example: foreign language requirement, examination requirement, seminar presentation requirement, teaching requirements, capstone requirement, etc. If no special requirements, please state "N/A."]

2.1.4 Advancement to Candidacy: Before advancing to candidacy for the Master's degree, a student must have satisfied all plan requirements set by the graduate program and must have maintained a minimum GPA of [3.0, or higher] in all course work undertaken. Normally, students advance by the end of the [XX] semester. The student must file the appropriate paperwork (Application for Advancement to Candidacy for the Master's Degree and Conflict of Interest Form).

2.1.5 Thesis Requirements: [Specify any program-specific requirements, such as length or format of any written or oral requirement, and a typical timeline. See Instructions for sample language. Towards the end, be sure to keep the language below:]

Should the Thesis Committee determine that the thesis is unacceptable, a recommendation to disqualify the student may be made to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education.

Detailed information and instructions on the submission and filing of the thesis is available in the UCM Thesis and Dissertational Manual. A schedule of dates for filing the thesis in final form are published on the Graduate Division website in the [Dates and Deadlines section](#).

2.2 Degree Plan II- Non-thesis: This plan requires a minimum of [24, or more] units in approved courses, at least [20, or more] of which must be from graduate-level courses in the 200 series. [Name the examination or other capstone project here] is required of each candidate. No thesis is required.

2.2.1 Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): [list all PLOs for Plan II]

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2.2.2 Course Requirements - Core and Electives (total [] units)

[Discuss the course requirements. Include a tabular list with the following information:]

2.2.2.1 Core Courses (total [] units)

[For example]

Course Number	Course Name	Units
[GC 200]	Graduate Council- Core	4]

2.2.2.2 Elective Courses (total [] units)

[For example]

Course Number	Course Name	Units
[GC 201]	Graduate Council-Elective	4]

2.2.2.3 Summary: [] units of core coursework and [] units of elective coursework are required for a total of [] units. Full-time students must enroll for 12 units per semester including research, academic and seminar units. *[Specify if any courses may be taken S/U, and if so, whether they may be counted to fulfill course requirements.]* Per UC regulations, ordinarily students shall not receive credits for more than 12 units of graduate-level (200) courses per semester. *[If applicable to your graduate group, please note that electives are chosen with the approval of the graduate advisor.]*

2.2.3 Special Requirements: *[Instructions available in section 2.1.3.]*

2.2.4 Advancement to Candidacy: Before advancing to candidacy for the Master's degree, a student must have satisfied all plan requirements set by the graduate program and must have maintained a minimum GPA of **[3.0, or higher]** in all course work undertaken. Normally, students advance by the end of the **[XX]** semester. The student must file the appropriate paperwork (Application for Advancement to Candidacy for the Master's Degree).

2.2.5 Comprehensive Examination:

2.2.5.1 Timing: Students may take the comprehensive examination **[once they have advanced to candidacy; or use program's own, more stringent, requirements here].** However, it is important that the capstone requirement be completed at or near the end of the coursework for the Master's degree. For most students, the exam is taken at the end of **[XX]** semester. Students must be registered or in current filing fee status at the time when they take the examination.

2.2.5.2 Examination: *[Describe the comprehensive exam. Is it an oral or written exam? Who writes the questions and how many questions are there? Who grades the exam? Consult the Instructions document for sample language.]*

2.2.5.3 Outcome: Examinations can result in either a pass, fail, or partial pass by unanimous consensus of the Comprehensive Examination Committee. The results, as well as the procedures for repeating a failed examination, are

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described in Section VI. F of Graduate P&P Handbook. The committee must report the result to the Graduate Council via the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education within 30 days, using the Final Report for the Master's Degree Form found on the Graduate Division website.

2.3 Degree Plan- Professional Masters

Policies and Procedures for Professional Masters programs are in development at the campus level.

2.4. Advising Structure and Mentoring [2.4.2 and 2.4.3 are in development—please fill if your group already has pertinent policy and/or information]

2.4.1 Advising Structure: A graduate student is expected to have a faculty advisor at all times during their graduate studies. *[State your group's methods for assigning advisors here.]*

In the absence of a faculty advisor, the Graduate Group Chair becomes the student's temporary advisor. It is the responsibility of the student to secure a permanent advisor in a timely manner. *[If your group elects to have a different procedure for when a student is without an advisor, please state it here instead of this paragraph.]*

The *[graduate group name]* has adopted *[the [GC approved](#), or its own—please specify]* Mentoring Guidelines, which can be found at *[location]*. *[Specify the role of the Graduate Group Chair, Graduate Advisor, Staff, etc. here. See Example in the Instructions, if needed.]*

2.4.2 Evaluation of Student Progress

2.4.3 Grievance Procedures

2.5. Master's Degree Committees: *[List all committees that are relevant to a Master's education in your program, for example the Thesis Committee, Comprehensive Examination Committee (if your program has Plan II), etc. Please be sure these committee descriptions are consistent with your bylaws.]*

2.5.1 Thesis Committee: *[State who]* nominates *[three, or more]* faculty, who are voting members of the University of California Academic Senate or the equivalent, to serve on the Thesis Committee. *[Add description of additional members, if any.]* These nominations are submitted, as recommendations from the Graduate Group Chair, to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education for formal appointment in accordance with Graduate Council policy. The Chair of the committee shall be a member of the Merced Division and of the Graduate Group supervising the master's program. Detailed instructions are found in Graduate Policies and Procedures, Section VII. A.2.2, at the [Graduate Division Website](#).

2.5.2 Comprehensive Examination Committee: *[State who]* nominates Comprehensive Examination Committee. *[The Graduate Group determines the membership, in accordance*

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with Graduate Council policy. Indicate whether or not the advisor is a member of the committee and indicate how the Chair of the committee is chosen. See sample language in the Instructions.]

2.6 Normative Time to Degree: For students who are engaged in full-time study and making adequate progress, it is expected that they would advance to candidacy and complete the degree in [XX years/semesters].

2.7 Typical Timeline and Sequence of Events: The goals and needs of individual students vary considerably, and no single plan will accommodate all students. Therefore, the following program of study should be considered as a general guide only. In particular, the following example illustrates a 2-year program of study, which may not be appropriate for all students.

[Adjust the dates for correction of course deficiencies, etc according to your program's deadlines. For example:]

Year One	Fall	Spring (Course deficiencies corrected)
	[GC 200- Introduction to GC	GC 210- GC Seminar
	GC 201- Introduction to GC Writing	GC 220- GC Professional Seminar
	GC 202- Introduction to GC Review	GC 230- GC Seminar
Year Two	Fall (Advancement to Candidacy)	Spring (Comprehensive Exam/Thesis completed)
	GC 240- GC Course	GC 260- GC Seminar
	GC 250- GC Course	GC 280- Directed Study
	GC 255- GC Course	GC 285- Independent Study]

2.8 Sources of Funding: [Rather than simply listing all possible opportunities, provide a realistic guide of possible funding and sources that can help students be successful in acquiring their own funding.]

3. Doctoral Degree Requirements

3.1 Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): [List the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for the Doctoral Degree]

3.2 Course Requirements - Core and Electives (total [] units)

[Discuss the course requirements. Include a tabular list as below. **Be sure to include the following information:**] Courses taken toward a graduate degree at another institution cannot be transferred for credit toward a Ph.D. at UC Merced. However, a course requirement may be waived if a similar course was taken at another institution. The General Petition form should be used for all requests for waivers of course work.

3.2.1. Core Courses (total [] units)

Course Number	Course Name	Units
[GC 200	Introduction to Graduate Council	4]

3.2.2. Elective Courses (total [] units)

Course Number	Course Name	Units
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[GC 222]	Graduate Council Seminar	4]
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3.2.3. Summary: [] units of core coursework and [] units of elective coursework are required for a total of [] units. Full-time students must enroll for 12 units per semester including research, academic and seminar units. Per UC regulations, ordinarily students shall not receive credits for more than 12 units of graduate level courses per semester. *[List any other requirements or policies of the graduate group on courses here.]*

3.3 Special Requirements: *[Specify any special requirements such as a foreign language requirement, teaching requirements, etc. If none, state "N/A. " Below are examples, only for programs that have them. If there are requirements not listed below, please add to the end of the section. See Instructions document for the required procedures to notify the Graduate Division.]*

3.3.1 Teaching Requirement: *[Name of the graduate program]* requires all graduate students pursuing the Ph.D. to acquire teaching experience at the post-secondary level under faculty supervision, for *[enter the required time period, such as "at least one semester"]*. This requirement is usually satisfied by appointment as a Teaching Assistant or Teaching Fellow in undergraduate courses. *[State a waiver policy, if any, here, or as Item 3.3.3.]* For more information, consult the Academic Appointment and Graduate Student Employment section in the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook.

3.3.2. Language Requirement: *[State by when the completion of this requirement must occur, and describe how the examination is given.]*

3.4 Dissertation Plan: In accordance with University of California policy, a minimum of four semesters in academic residence is required prior to awarding the Ph.D. Typically, a longer period of study, four to six years, is required for completion of all degree requirements. All graduate students are considered resident graduates not candidates for a degree, unless admitted to candidacy after completion of all candidacy requirements and approval by the Graduate Division after formal application. A student advances to candidacy for the Ph.D. upon successfully demonstrating a high level of scholarship at the Ph.D. level, and upon completing all preparatory work and demonstrating readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase. Section 3.9 provides more detailed information on the dissertation phase.

3.5. Advising Structure and Mentoring: *[3.5.2 and 3.5.3 are in development—please fill if your group already has pertinent policy and/or information]*

3.5.1 Advising Structure: A graduate student is expected to have a faculty advisor at all times during their graduate studies. *[State your group's methods for assigning advisors here.]*

In the absence of a faculty advisor, the Graduate Group Chair becomes the student's temporary advisor. It is the responsibility of the student to secure a permanent advisor in a timely manner. *[If your group elects to have a different procedure for when a student is without an advisor, please state it here instead of this paragraph.]*

The *[graduate group name]* has adopted *[the GC approved, or its own—please specify]* Mentoring Guidelines, which can be found at *[location]*. *[Specify the role of the Graduate Group Chair, Graduate Advisor, Staff, etc. here. See Example in the Instructions, if needed.]*

3.5.2 Evaluation of Student Progress

3.5.3 Grievance Procedures

3.6. Doctoral Degree Committees: *[List all committees that are relevant to PhD education in your program, for example the Candidacy Committee, Doctoral Committee, etc. Please be sure these committee descriptions are consistent with your bylaws. If a Committee is formed before the Candidacy Committee in your program, please adjust the numbering accordingly.]*

3.6.1 Candidacy Committee: The Candidacy Committee is charged with determining the fitness of the student to proceed with the doctoral dissertation through a formal Qualifying Examination. The Candidacy Committee is comprised of **[three, or more]** faculty who are voting members of the University of California, Academic Senate. Nominations of non-faculty members (i.e. Professional Researchers or faculty members from other universities) will be considered on an exception-only basis. For further details on the appointment process, see the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook on Doctoral Candidacy Committee.

3.6.2 Doctoral Committee: The Doctoral Committee shall supervise the preparation and completion of the dissertation and the final examination. The Doctoral Committee is a **[]**-member committee selected by **[specify the selection process, and when. Sample language available in the Instructions.]** Member nominations are submitted to the Graduate Division for formal appointment in accordance with Graduate Council policy.

3.7. Advancement to Candidacy: All graduate students are considered resident graduates, not candidates for a degree, unless admitted to candidacy by the Graduate Division after formal application. Before advancing to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have satisfied all requirements set by the graduate program **[you may wish to reiterate important requirements here]**, must have maintained a minimum GPA of **[3.0, or higher]** in all course work undertaken, and must have passed unanimously the Qualifying Examination before the Candidacy Committee appointed to administer that examination. **[List additional requirements, if any.]** Normally, students advance by the end of the **[]** semester. The student must file the appropriate paperwork (Advance to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor Philosophy Form and Conflict of Interest Form) with the Graduate Division and pay the candidacy fee in order to be officially promoted to Ph.D. Candidacy.

[if your program offers "en route" Master's degree upon advancement to candidacy, describe it here as a subsection (3.7.1) OR refer to Section 3.13 and give details in that section]

3.8. Qualifying Examination Requirements: *[State the graduate group's requirements before advancement; for example, are students required to complete ALL course requirements, or the majority of course requirements?]* Passing this exam makes the student eligible for advancement to candidacy. The qualifying exam should be taken by the **[]** semester and no later than the end of the **[]** semester after admission to the Ph.D. program.

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[State all of the examination requirements. Specify the nature of the examinations and when they are taken. Separate each section accordingly. See Instructions for sample language.]

3.9. Dissertation Requirements: [Generally describe the dissertation (and final examination), and any additional program-specific requirements, such as length or presentation format of any written or oral requirement. See sample language in the Instruction document. **Towards the end, be sure to keep the language below:**]

Upon completion of the final examination and approval of the dissertation, the Doctoral Committee recommends, by submission of the Report on Final Examination of the Ph.D. Degree Form, the conferral of the Ph.D. subject to final submission of the approved dissertation for deposit in the University Archives. The Committee recommendation must be unanimous.

Detailed information and instructions on the submission and filing of the dissertation is available in the UCM Thesis and Dissertational Manual. A schedule of dates for filing the thesis in final form are published on the Graduate Division website in the [Dates and Deadlines section](#).

3.10. Normative Time to Degree: Normative Time to Advancement to Candidacy in [name of the graduate program] is [] semesters for students who pursue the Ph.D. directly after the bachelor’s degree. Normative Time in Candidacy, which are the remaining semesters recommended for completion of the dissertation, is [] semesters.

3.11. Typical Timeline and Sequence of Events

[The below table is only provided as an example: timeline may vary by program]

<i>Year One</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring (first year exam, if any, completed)</i>
	GC 200- Introduction to GC	[GC 210- GC Seminar
	GC 201- Introduction to GC Discussion	GC 220- GC Professional Seminar
	GC 202- Introduction to GC Review	GC 230- GC Seminar
<i>Year Two</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
	GC 240- GC Course	GC 260- GC Seminar
	GC 250- GC Course	GC 280- Directed Study
	GC 255- GC Course	GC 285- Independent Study
<i>Year Three</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring (advancement to PhD candidacy)</i>
	GC 270- GC Course	GC 295- Practicum
	GC 290- Directed Study	GC 290- Directed Study
	Qualifying Exam Preparation	Qualifying Exams
<i>Year Four-Five</i>	Dissertation	

3.12. Sources of Funding: [Describe how students are typically supported in your program. Rather than simply listing all possible opportunities, provide a realistic guide of possible funding and sources that

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can help students be successful in acquiring their own funding. See Instructions for suggested sources to list in this section. Be sure to include the information in the following paragraph:]

A graduate student who meets the criteria for appointment may be employed in teaching services (as a Teaching Assistant or a Teaching Fellow) for up to 12 semesters (summer appointments are excluded from these limits). Following advancement to candidacy, doctoral students who are not California residents will have their Nonresident Tuition reduced by 100 percent for a maximum of three consecutive calendar years. Any such student who continues to be enrolled or who re-enrolls after receiving the reduced fee for three years will be charged the full Nonresident Tuition that is in effect at that time.

- 3.13. Change of Degree Level (Ph.D. to Masters, and/or Master's to Ph.D.):** *[Include this section if your program offers in lieu or terminal masters, and/or allow master's students to apply internally to transfer to the Ph.D. program. See Instructions for examples.]*

4. General Information

- 4.1. PELP, In Absentia and Filing Fee status.** *[Include, at least, the following statement:]*

Information about PELP (Planned Educational Leave Program), In Absentia (reduced fees when researching out of state), and Filing Fee status can be found in the Graduate Group Policies and Procedures Handbook, available on the Graduate Division Website.