

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE DEGREES

The general requirements for the Graduate Certificate, Master, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees conferred upon the recommendation of the Graduate College are discussed on the appropriate tabs. Students must also become familiar with any additional requirements established for their specific program. Such requirements are set forth under the **Programs and Curriculum Requirements** (<https://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/programs-requirements/>) section of this Graduate Studies Catalog and in program descriptions that may be provided to students at the time of their admission. Many of the requirements detailed below are accomplished/ reported by the student via *Seguidor*™, UNMC's online graduate student information system. Detailed degree requirement timelines, together with procedures and documentation instructions, can be found at the UNMC Graduate Studies website (<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/>).

Graduate Certificate General Requirements for the Graduate Certificate

The general requirements for the Certificate conferred upon the recommendation of the Graduate College are discussed below. Students must also become familiar with any additional requirements established for their specific program. Such requirements are set forth under the **Programs and Curriculum Requirements** section of this Graduate Studies Catalog and in program descriptions that may be provided to students at the time of their admission. Many of the requirements detailed below are accomplished/ reported by the student via *Seguidor*™, UNMC's online graduate student information system. Detailed degree requirement timelines, together with procedures and documentation instructions, can be found at the UNMC Graduate Studies (<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/>) website.

General Requirements for the Graduate Certificates

All Certificates require a minimum of 12 credit hours. It is the responsibility of the student and Advisor to ensure a minimum of 12 credit hours when completing the program of study.

Time Requirements

The work required for the Certificate must be completed within 3 consecutive calendar years.

Advisor and Advisory Committee

Certificates will require a Graduate Faculty Advisor and optional committee. The advisor **must be appointed within 6 months after matriculation (8 months for part-time students)**.

Program of Study

The Advisor approved (official) **Program of Study** must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office (via *Seguidor*) within 7 months after matriculation (9 months for part-time students). The *Program of Study* is considered to be a living document; however, any changes in the program or in the thesis topic (if applicable) must be approved by the Advisor and the action reported to the Graduate Studies Office via *Seguidor*.

Requirements for Completion of the Certificate in a Given Semester

Students who expect to complete degree requirements within a given semester must file an application for the diploma and pay the non-refundable \$50 fee by the date specified in the current academic calendar (generally, October 1 for December graduation, February 1 for May graduation, and June 1 for August graduation).

Master's Degree (non-MS) General Requirements for the Master's Degree (non-MS)

All The general requirements for the Master's degrees conferred upon the recommendation of the Graduate College are discussed below. Students must also become familiar with any additional requirements established for their specific program. Such requirements are set forth under the Programs and Curriculum Requirements section of this Graduate Studies Bulletin and in program descriptions that may be provided to students at the time of their admission. Many of the requirements detailed below are accomplished/ reported by the student via *Seguidor*™, UNMC's online graduate student information system. Detailed degree requirement timelines, together with procedures and documentation instructions, can be found at the UNMC Graduate Studies website.

Master's degrees require a minimum of 30 credit hours and are non-thesis.

Non-Thesis Option

The Non-Thesis Master's is offered by certain programs upon the advice and with the approval of the student's Advisor and the program Graduate Committee. This option permits more intensive work in formal courses and does not require a thesis or a Final Oral Exam. Non-Thesis students must complete a Comprehensive Exam (see **Examinations**, below) at least 2 weeks before Commencement. Course requirements:

- If a graduate program has an established Non-Thesis Option core curriculum, students admitted to that program must meet only the course requirements for that program.

Residence and Time Requirements

At least 50% of the required coursework must be completed on the campuses of the University of Nebraska after the student has been formally admitted and registered in the Graduate College. Appropriate courses may be taken on other campuses of the University of Nebraska. The work required for the Master degree must be completed within 5 consecutive calendar years.

Advisor and Advisory Committee

The Graduate Program Director (chair of the program's Graduate Committee) shall serve as the student's temporary advisor until appointment of a permanent Advisor (mentor). The permanent Advisor, who chairs the student's Advisory Committee, must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. The Advisory Committee consists of 3 or more members, including the Advisor, selected by the program's Graduate Committee and submitted by the student via *Seguidor* for approval by the Dean for Graduate Studies. The Advisory Committee acts on behalf of, and reports to, the program Graduate Committee and is responsible for supervising the student's work toward earning the Master degree. In order to assure that the student receives routine guidance, the Advisory Committee must be appointed within **6 months after matriculation (8**

months for part-time students) and must meet with the student at least once every 6 months thereafter.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

As a supplement to the academic and career guidance provided by his/her Advisor and Advisory Committee, each **Master student must complete an IDP within 1 year after matriculation**. The student should consult with the Graduate Program Director to identify the specific IDP that should be utilized. Documentation that the student has completed an IDP (e.g. Certificate of Completion, if using myIDP) must be submitted via Seguidor. Students are urged to discuss the IDP with their Advisor so that their training can be optimized to meet specific career goals, and to revisit their IDP annually in order to best benefit from use of this tool.

Program of Study

Approximately 4 months after matriculation (6 months for part-time students), the student and his/her Advisor (or temporary advisor) should begin to formulate a proposed Program of Study that includes designation of all required courses, options for electives, and the general area of research for the thesis (if applicable; see below). Upon appointment of the Advisory Committee, the student should confer with that group and his/her Advisor regarding the proposed Program of Study, revising the document as necessary based on the advice of these individuals. **The Advisory Committee-approved (official) Program of Study must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office (via Seguidor) within 7 months after matriculation (9 months for part-time students)**. The Master degree can transfer a maximum of 12 credits from a professional program. The Program of Study is considered to be a living document; however, any changes in the program or in the thesis topic (if applicable) must be approved by the Advisory Committee and the action reported to the Graduate Studies Office via Seguidor.

Examinations

A written and/or oral Comprehensive Examination is required to cover each Master's student's approved Program of Study. The nature and format of the exam is specified by the Graduate Committee overseeing the program in which the student is enrolled; students should contact the graduate program director for guidance in this regard. Non-Thesis Students must complete the Comprehensive Exam at least 2 weeks before Commencement.

If more than one member of the Examining Committee recommends failure in a Comprehensive Exam or Final Oral Exam, the student shall be considered to have failed the examination. In the event of failure, the Examining Committee shall recommend to the Dean for Graduate Studies whether the student should be given the option of retaking the examination and, if so, the committee shall identify general areas of weakness that require special attention and any specific remedial actions that the student should complete prior to re-examination. This information must be reported in Seguidor (at the time of exam grading), and is subsequently transmitted in writing to the student. No student shall be permitted to take either the Comprehensive Exam or Final Oral Exam more than twice. Re-examination must occur at least 1 month and no more than 6 months after failing the initial exam, with the exact duration of this interval between exam attempts determined by the student's Examining Committee. The same committee shall administer the re-examination unless the Graduate Committee responsible for the student's program recommends and the Dean for Graduate Studies approves a substitution.

Requirements for Completion of the Master's Degree in a Given Semester

Students who expect to complete degree requirements within a given semester must file an application for the diploma and pay the non-refundable \$50 fee by the date specified in the current academic calendar (generally, October 1 for December graduation, February 1 for May graduation, and June 1 for August graduation).

Non-Thesis Option students: The following graduation documentation must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office no later than 1 week prior to Commencement: Report on Master's Degree form, and the Certificates of Completion for 2 online surveys (Convocation & Accomplishments Survey, and Graduate Program Effectiveness & Student Satisfaction Survey).

Graduation Instructions for Non-Thesis Master's Students are available online, (https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/_documents/graduation-instructions-non-thesis-m-s-students.pdf) providing guidance for these students as they approach the end of their degree program. Students who have earned the Non-thesis Master's degree and later elect to pursue the Ph.D. degree must give evidence of ability to conduct independent research, which may require them to spend more than the minimum time in completing the requirements for the doctoral degree.

Master of Science (MS) General Requirements for the Master of Science (M.S.) Degree

All Master's degrees require a minimum of 30 credit hours. For programs with requirements described in terms of courses rather than credits, or programs with flexible requirements, it is the responsibility of the student and Advisory Committee to ensure a minimum of 30 credit hours when completing the program of study.

Residence and Time Requirements

At least 50% of the required coursework must be completed on the campuses of the University of Nebraska after the student has been formally admitted and registered in the Graduate College. Appropriate courses may be taken on other campuses of the University of Nebraska. The work required for the M.S. degree must be completed within 5 consecutive calendar years. No graduate credits will be accepted as transfer credit toward a master's program at UNMC if the course work is 10 years or older or if the course work has been applied toward a previously completed post-baccalaureate degree at any institution, including UNMC.

Advisor and Advisory Committee

The Graduate Program Director (chair of the program's Graduate Committee) shall serve as the student's temporary advisor until appointment of a permanent Advisor (mentor). The permanent Advisor, who chairs the student's Advisory Committee, must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. The Advisory Committee consists of 3 or more members, including the Advisor, selected by the program's Graduate Committee and submitted by the student via Seguidor (<https://net.unmc.edu/seguidor/>) for approval by the Dean for Graduate Studies. The Advisory Committee acts on behalf of, and reports to, the program Graduate Committee and is responsible for supervising the student's work toward earning the M.S. degree. In order to assure that the student receives routine guidance, **the Advisory Committee must be appointed within 6 months after matriculation (8 months for part-time students) and must meet with the student at least once every 6 months thereafter**.

UNMC Compact

The UNMC Compact is a requirement for all thesis (MS) students. The UNMC Compact Between Graduate Students and their Research Advisors presents guiding principles and discussion points intended to support the development of positive mentoring relationships between predoctoral students and their research advisors. Before a faculty member agrees to serve as a student's research advisor, the faculty member and the graduate student are required to review the compact together, discuss the issues raised, and complete and sign the document where indicated. If the parties do not agree or cannot come to terms regarding items in the Compact, then the student should work with their program director to identify a more compatible research advisor. The agreements made during the discussion of the compact should be presented in the student's first supervisory committee meeting. **The student must upload a completed and signed copy of the Compact in Seguidor within 2 weeks of selecting an advisor.** The student and the advisor are encouraged to review and update this document together annually and discuss any necessary modifications to the agreement. If the parties do not agree or cannot come to terms during this annual review of the Compact, then the graduate program director is encouraged to mediate. If, after due diligence the matter is deemed irreconcilable, then the student can identify a new research advisor through the Guidelines & Procedures for Graduate Students Changing their Research Advisors. (<https://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/process-for-changing-research-advisors/>)

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

As a supplement to the academic and career guidance provided by his/her Advisor and Advisory Committee, **each M.S. student must complete an IDP within 1 year after matriculation.** The student should consult with the Graduate Program Director to identify the specific IDP that should be utilized. Documentation that the student has completed an IDP (e.g. Certificate of Completion, if using myIDP (<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>)) must be submitted via *Seguidor*. Students are urged to discuss the IDP with their Advisor so that their training can be optimized to meet specific career goals, and to revisit their IDP annually in order to best benefit from use of this tool.

Program of Study

Approximately 4 months after matriculation (6 months for part-time students), the student and his/her Advisor (or temporary advisor) should begin to formulate a proposed *Program of Study* that includes designation of all required courses, options for electives, and the general area of research for the thesis (if applicable; see below). Upon appointment of the Advisory Committee, the student should confer with that group and his/her Advisor regarding the proposed *Program of Study*, revising the document as necessary based on the advice of these individuals. **The Advisory Committee-approved (official) Program of Study must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office (via Seguidor) within 7 months after matriculation (9 months for part-time students).** The *Program of Study* is considered to be a living document; however, any changes in the program or in the thesis topic (if applicable) must be approved by the Advisory Committee and the action reported to the Graduate Studies Office via *Seguidor*.

Options for the M.S. Degree

The Graduate College, except in programs where such a choice is not given, offers the M.S. degree under two options: **Thesis** or **Non-Thesis**. In choosing an option, students should be guided by the type of training that is appropriate for their academic, professional and career goals. Course requirements for the M.S. degree under either option may be met (a) with

approved courses selected from those offered by any UNMC graduate program, or (b) by approved courses selected from those offered in some field of study within a specific department or group of departments that has been approved by the Graduate Council.

Thesis Option

The Thesis Option should be chosen by M.S. students who are preparing for careers in research and/or scholarly work. The Thesis Option requires completion of a Master's Thesis in the candidate's research area. Regular participation in the seminar program of the major area of study is also required. Course requirements:

- **If a graduate program has an established Thesis Option core curriculum**, students admitted to that program must meet only the course requirements for that program.
- **For programs without an established core curriculum**, Thesis Option students must complete at least 6 graduate courses that are graded (not pass/fail). No more than 3 of these courses may be "introductory" courses (800-level, with 600-level or lower counterparts). Multiple appearances of the same course number on a student's transcript (e.g., a course taken every semester) are considered to be a single course in fulfilling the requirement for 6 graduate-level courses. The program's Graduate Committee or the student's Advisory Committee may also require the student to complete various techniques courses, language courses, research courses, special topics, etc.; however, none of these courses may be used to meet the requirements for the 6 graduate courses.

All M.S. students pursuing the Thesis Option must pass both a Comprehensive Exam and a Final Oral Exam (thesis defense; see **Examinations**, below). The Comprehensive Exam must occur at least 3 weeks before the Final Oral Exam. (In other words, the Final Oral Exam must be completed at least 3 weeks after completing the Comprehensive Exam.)

The subject of the Master's Thesis must be approved by the program Graduate Committee. The thesis work should reveal a capacity to carry on independent study or research and should demonstrate the student's ability to use the techniques employed in the field of investigation. The Thesis must conform to the style accepted at UNMC, as detailed in the Thesis & Graduation Instructions for M.S. Students. (https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/_documents/thesis-graduation-instructions-ms-students.pdf) Candidates are encouraged to submit data contained in the Thesis for publication before completion of the degree requirements.

The Master's Thesis must be presented in final form to the student's Advisor at least 4 weeks before the thesis defense (Final Oral Exam) and at least 6 weeks before Commencement. Any necessary revisions to the thesis must be completed, and the final document approved by the student's Advisor, before distribution to the student's Advisory Committee (at least 2 weeks before the Final Oral Exam). The Final Oral Exam must take place at least 2 weeks prior to Commencement. When the Final Oral Exam has been completed successfully, the final version of the Master's Thesis must be submitted electronically to the DigitalCommons@UNMC no later than 1 week prior to Commencement.

Non-Thesis Option

The Non-Thesis M.S. Option is offered by certain programs upon the advice and with the approval of the student's Advisor and the program Graduate Committee. This option permits more intensive work in formal courses and does not require a thesis or a Final Oral Exam. Regular participation in the seminar program of the major area of study is

required. Non-Thesis students must complete a Comprehensive Exam (see **Examinations**, below) at least 2 weeks before Commencement. Course requirements:

- **If a graduate program has an established Non-Thesis Option core curriculum**, students admitted to that program must meet only the course requirements for that program.
- **For programs without an established core curriculum**, Non-Thesis Option students must complete 11 graduate courses that are graded (not Pass/Fail), 4 of which may be "introductory" courses (800-level, with 600-level or lower counterparts). Multiple appearances of the same course number on a student's transcript (e.g., a course taken every semester) are considered to be a single course in fulfilling the requirement for 11 graduate-level courses. Because the Non-Thesis Option is not a research degree, no more than 2 of the 11 courses may be Research Other Than Thesis.

Graduation Instructions for Non-Thesis M.S. Students are available online (https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/_documents/graduation-instructions-non-thesis-m-s-students.pdf), providing guidance for these students as they approach the end of their degree program. Students who have earned the Non-thesis M.S. degree and later elect to pursue the Ph.D. degree must give evidence of ability to conduct independent research, which may require them to spend more than the minimum time in completing the requirements for the doctoral degree.

Examinations

A written and/or oral Comprehensive Examination is required to cover each M.S. student's approved *Program of Study*. The nature and format of the exam is specified by the Graduate Committee overseeing the program in which the student is enrolled; students should contact the graduate program director for guidance in this regard. **Students pursuing the Non-Thesis option** must complete the Comprehensive Exam at least 2 weeks before Commencement. **Students pursuing the Thesis option** must complete the Comprehensive Exam at least 3 weeks before the Final Oral Exam (Thesis Defense), and at least 5 weeks before Commencement.

At least 2 weeks prior to the exam, all M.S. students must request (via *Seguidor*) scheduling of the Comprehensive Exam and provide the names of the Examining Committee members (at least 3 members). The exam can be administered only after the request is approved by the Graduate Program Director and Dean for Graduate Studies. If the exam includes an oral component, at least 3 members of the Examining Committee must be available for the examination, with exceptions made only by permission of the Dean for Graduate Studies. The Examining Committee must report (via *Seguidor*) the results within 7 days after completion of the exam.

Thesis Option students also must compete a Final Oral Exam (thesis defense), which cannot be scheduled until they have passed the Comprehensive Exam. The Examining Committee for the Final Oral Exam shall consist of at least 3 members (typically, the student's Advisory Committee). One member of the Examining Committee must be Graduate Faculty (typically, the student's Advisor). At least 2 weeks prior to the anticipated date of the exam, the student must (via *Seguidor*) create the Examining Committee and submit the official request to schedule the Final Oral Exam. The student may complete the Final Oral Exam only upon approval by the program Graduate Committee and Dean for Graduate Studies. The Graduate Faculty member of the Examining Committee (typically, the student's Advisor) and at least 2 other members of the Examining Committee must be available for the examination, with exceptions made only by permission of the Dean for Graduate Studies. The Examining Committee must report the results (via *Seguidor*)

within 7 days after completion of the exam. (**Note:** Because the Examining Committee has 7 days to report the results of the Comprehensive Exam, and requests to schedule the Final Oral Exam must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to that exam, Thesis Option M.S. students should not plan to take the Final Oral Exam until at least 3 weeks after completing the Comprehensive Exam.)

If more than one member of the Examining Committee recommends failure in a Comprehensive Exam or Final Oral Exam, the student shall be considered to have failed the examination. In the event of failure, the Examining Committee shall recommend to the Dean for Graduate Studies whether the student should be given the option of retaking the examination and, if so, the committee shall identify general areas of weakness that require special attention and any specific remedial actions that the student should complete prior to re-examination. This information must be reported in *Seguidor* (at the time of exam grading), and is subsequently transmitted in writing to the student. No student shall be permitted to take either the Comprehensive Exam or Final Oral Exam more than twice. Re-examination must occur at least 1 month and no more than 6 months after failing the initial exam, with the exact duration of this interval between exam attempts determined by the student's Examining Committee. The same committee shall administer the re-examination unless the Graduate Committee responsible for the student's program recommends and the Dean for Graduate Studies approves a substitution.

Requirements for Completion of the M.S. Degree in a Given Semester

Students who expect to complete degree requirements within a given semester must file an application for the diploma and pay the non-refundable \$50 fee by the date specified in the current academic calendar (generally, October 1 for December graduation, February 1 for May graduation, and June 1 for August graduation).

- **Thesis Option students:** Students who have passed the Final Oral Exam must successfully upload their Master's Thesis to the DigitalCommons@UNMC and submit the following documents to the Graduate Studies Office no later than 1 week prior to Commencement: *Report on Master's Degree* form, and the *Certificates of Completion* for 2 online surveys (Convocation & Accomplishments Survey, and the Graduate Program Effectiveness & Student Satisfaction Survey).
- **Non-Thesis Option students:** The following graduation documentation must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office no later than 1 week prior to Commencement: *Report on Master's Degree* form, and the *Certificates of Completion* for 2 online surveys (Convocation & Accomplishments Survey, and Graduate Program Effectiveness & Student Satisfaction Survey).

The timeline and procedures necessary to ensure student progress toward the M.S. degree can be found (<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/programs/masters-timeline.html>) with this link.

Ph.D. General Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree Residence and Time Requirements

The Graduate College has established a residence requirement for the purpose of ensuring that the PhD program is reasonably compact, continuous, coherent, and that a substantial portion be done at the

University of Nebraska or under supervision of the faculty of the University of Nebraska. Accordingly, for any student beginning a PhD program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center:

- At least 50% of the required coursework must be completed on the campuses of the University of Nebraska after the student has been formally admitted and registered in the Graduate College;
- At least 50% of the required coursework (other than dissertation) must be completed within a consecutive 18-month period;
- If the student holds an M.S. degree or its equivalent, at least 50% of the required coursework (other than dissertation) must be completed after awarding of the M.S. degree;
- Multiple appearances of the same course number on a student's transcript (e.g., a seminar or journal course taken every semester) are considered to be a single course when determining if these residence requirements have been met;
- No graduate credits will be accepted as transfer credit toward a PhD program at UNMC if the course work is 10 years or older or if the course work has been applied toward a previously completed doctoral degree at any institution, including UNMC.

In exceptional circumstances, when it is clear that the purpose of residence will be fulfilled although the above formal conditions are not met, the student's Supervisory Committee may, with the approval of the Dean for Graduate Studies, recommend alternative procedures for satisfying the residence requirements. The plan for satisfying residence requirements shall be a part of the student's approved *Program of Study*.

A minimum of 4 full years of graduate study is normally required to complete a program for the PhD for a student who enters the program with a bachelor's degree. Neither the courses completed nor the time spent in study determines completion of requirements for the PhD degree. It is earned primarily through the pursuit of excellence in some special field of scholarship that involves the demonstrated ability to conduct independent research. The PhD degree must be completed within 7 years from the date of initial registration as a PhD-objective student.

Course Requirements

To complete the PhD degree, certain minimal course requirements must be met. Typically, this is accomplished by taking a core of courses defined by the graduate program and approved by the Graduate Council and the Dean for Graduate Studies. Students admitted to a graduate program that does **not** offer a core curriculum must meet the following minimum course requirements:

- The student must complete at least 9 graduate level courses that are graded (not pass/fail), only 3 of which may be "introductory" courses (800-level, with 600-level or lower counterparts). Multiple appearances of the same course number on a student's transcript (e.g., a course taken every semester) are considered to be a single course in fulfilling the requirement for 9 graduate-level courses.
- Although the student's Supervisory Committee may require non-dissertation research work, special topics or techniques courses, foreign language courses, etc., none of these courses may be used to meet the requirement for 9 graduate-level courses.
- It is the responsibility of the student's Supervisory Committee, in conjunction with the program's Graduate Committee, to ensure adequate didactic preparation of the student.

Research Requirements

All PhD students are required to complete the UNMC Responsible Conduct in Research program, and must participate in the seminar program within their major area.

PhD students who have begun training/research related to the dissertation topic under the mentorship of their permanent Supervisor should enroll in 999 (Doctoral Dissertation), rather than 896 (Research Other Than Thesis). Students may register for 999 (Doctoral Dissertation) either before or after admission to Candidacy. Registration in 999 is restricted to degree-seeking PhD students who are enrolled in a graduate program and who have a permanent Supervisor; Unclassified Students are ineligible.

A dissertation of publishable quality must be completed and successfully defended (see below). In addition, evidence must be presented that the dissertation material has been submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, with the student listed as first author on the manuscript.

- Shared first-authorship with another individual (i.e., author X and author Y contributed equally to this work) is acceptable with the Supervisor's written verification of the student's major role in the study.
- Cochrane-style systematic reviews and meta-analyses are acceptable; however, narrative literature reviews do not satisfy this requirement.
- In extraordinary circumstances, the Supervisory Committee may request a waiver of the submitted publication requirement, or any aspect of the requirement. Such a waiver requires approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

As a supplement to the academic and career guidance provided by his/her Supervisor and Supervisory Committee, **each PhD student must complete an IDP within 12 months after matriculation**. The student should consult with the Graduate Program Director to identify the specific IDP tool that should be utilized. Documentation that the student has completed an IDP (e.g. Certificate of Completion, if using myIDP (<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>)) must be submitted via *Seguidor*. Students are urged to discuss the IDP with their Supervisor so that their training can be optimized to meet specific career goals, and to revisit their IDP annually in order to best benefit from use of this tool.

Supervisor and Supervisory Committee

The Graduate Program Director (chair of the program's Graduate Committee) shall serve as the student's temporary supervisor until appointment of a permanent Supervisor (mentor). **Within 12 months after matriculation (18 months for part-time students), each student must designate (via *Seguidor*) a member of the Graduate Faculty to serve as his/her Supervisor and at least 3 other members of the Graduate Faculty to serve as his/her Supervisory Committee.** The student's Supervisor serves as chair of the Supervisory Committee, and should advise the student with regard to the overall composition of the Supervisory Committee. It is urged that one or more members of the Supervisory Committee be from a field or fields of study different from the major area of interest, whenever such representation will contribute to the student's program and/or the overall effectiveness of the graduate program. University of Nebraska faculty lacking Graduate Faculty status or faculty from outside the University of Nebraska may serve as members of the Supervisory Committee, serving in an advisory capacity (without a vote on exam outcomes). Individual degree programs may have additional requirements regarding the composition of the

Supervisory Committee. Designation of the Supervisor and members of the Supervisory Committee is subject to approval by the program Graduate Committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies. **In order to assure that the student receives routine guidance, the Supervisory Committee must meet with the student at least once every 6 months.** The student is responsible for uploading into Seguidor (<https://net.unmc.edu/seguidor/>) detailed minutes of each Supervisory Committee meeting (see Meeting Minutes Template (https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/_documents/semi-annual-committee-meeting.doc)), as well as any other documents (e.g. PowerPoint presentation) relevant to that meeting.

UNMC Compact

The UNMC Compact is a requirement for all PhD students. The UNMC Compact Between Graduate Students and their Research Advisors presents guiding principles and discussion points intended to support the development of positive mentoring relationships between predoctoral students and their research advisors. Before a faculty member agrees to serve as a student's research advisor, the faculty member and the graduate student are required to review the compact together, discuss the issues raised, and complete and sign the document where indicated. If the parties do not agree or cannot come to terms regarding items in the Compact, then the student should work with their program director to identify a more compatible research advisor. The agreements made during the discussion of the compact should be presented in the student's first supervisory committee meeting. **The student must upload a completed and signed copy of the Compact in Seguidor within 2 weeks of selecting an advisor.** The student and the advisor are encouraged to review and update this document together annually and discuss any necessary modifications to the agreement. If the parties do not agree or cannot come to terms during this annual review of the Compact, then the graduate program director is encouraged to mediate. If, after due diligence the matter is deemed irreconcilable, then the student can identify a new research advisor through the Guidelines & Procedures for Graduate Students Changing their Research Advisors.

Program of Study

Approximately 9 months after matriculation (12 months for part-time students), the student and his/her Supervisor (or temporary supervisor) should begin to formulate a proposed *Program of Study* that includes designation of all required courses, options for electives, and the general area of research for the dissertation. Upon appointment of the Supervisory Committee, the student should confer with that group and his/her Supervisor regarding the proposed *Program of Study*, revising the document as necessary based on the advice of these individuals.

The Supervisory Committee-approved (official) Program of Study must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office within 13 months after matriculation (19 months for part-time students). The *Program of Study* is considered to be a living document; however, any changes in the program or in the dissertation topic must be approved by the Supervisory Committee and the action reported to the Graduate Studies Office.

Qualifying Procedure

Certain programs may require specific qualifying procedures and/or examinations that must be completed during the early phases of study. Qualifying requirements are indicated in the **Programs & Curriculum Requirements** section of this Catalog, as appropriate for individual graduate programs. If a Qualifying Exam is required, the student must create the Examining Committee and request to schedule the Qualifying Exam (via Seguidor (<https://net.unmc.edu/seguidor/>)) **no later than 2 weeks prior to the examination.** The student may complete the Qualifying Exam only upon approval by the program Graduate Committee and Dean

for Graduate Studies. The majority vote of the Examining Committee is required to pass the examination. The Examining Committee must report the results (via *Seguidor*) within 7 days after completion of the exam.

Comprehensive Examination and Admission to Candidacy

When a student has substantially completed his/her didactic studies, he/she must pass a Comprehensive Exam. The Comprehensive Exam may consist of several parts. At the discretion of the Supervisory Committee or as a program requirement, the Comprehensive Exam format may be oral, written, or both. The Comprehensive Exam is not a repetition of course examinations but is an investigation of the student's breadth of understanding of the field of knowledge of which his/her special subject is a part.

The required and elective courses that must be completed prior to the Comprehensive Exam are specified by each PhD program. **Full-time PhD students must attempt the exam before the end of their third year of study. Part-time students must attempt the exam before the end of their fourth year of study.** (Individual programs may have more specific/restrictive deadlines.) Students not attempting the Comprehensive Exam by their program's established deadline will be considered to have failed the initial attempt – see [Failing the Exam](#) (below). Students who fail the initial attempt as a result of missing the deadline must take the exam (2nd attempt) a minimum of 1 month and no more than 6 months after the established deadline. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program.

The Supervisory Committee or program Graduate Committee arranges for the Comprehensive Exam. **At least 2 weeks prior to the exam**, the student must create the Examining Committee (which may be the Supervisory Committee) according to program requirements and request to schedule the Comprehensive Exam. This task is accomplished in *Seguidor*. The exam can be administered only upon approval by the program Graduate Committee and Dean for Graduate Studies. At least 3 Graduate Faculty members of the Examining Committee must be available for the examination, with exceptions made only by permission of the Dean for Graduate Studies. The report of the outcome of the exam must be filed (via Seguidor (<https://net.unmc.edu/seguidor/>)) within 7 days following the examination.

Failing the Exam: If more than one graduate faculty member of the Examining Committee recommends failure, the student shall be considered to have failed the examination. In the event of failure, the Examining Committee shall recommend to the Dean for Graduate Studies whether the student should be given the option of retaking the examination and, if so, the Committee shall identify general areas of weakness that require special attention, and any specific remedial actions that the student should complete prior to re-examination (2nd attempt). This information must be detailed in *Seguidor* when reporting the exam outcome, and will subsequently be transmitted in writing to the student. No student shall be permitted to take either the written or oral portion of the Comprehensive Examination more than twice. Re-examination must occur at least 1 month and no more than 6 months after failing the initial exam, with the exact duration of this interval between exam attempts determined by the student's Examining Committee. Failure of the Comprehensive Exam on the 2nd attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

When the student has passed the Comprehensive Exam **and** satisfied the coursework and other requirements of his/her approved program, including those established by the Supervisory Committee, he/she will be admitted to Candidacy for the PhD degree. The effective date

of Candidacy shall be the date on which the student passed the Comprehensive Exam. The duration of Candidacy shall be 4 years, during which the Final Oral Exam must be completed. With permission from the Dean of Graduate Studies, the term of Candidacy may be extended beyond 4 years; without such permission, the Candidate must pass another Comprehensive Exam in order to extend the term of Candidacy.

Following admission to Candidacy, students are expected to focus the majority of their effort toward completion of the dissertation project. Candidates may elect to enroll in additional courses if deemed useful for training and/or professional development, provided that doing so does not impede progress toward completing degree requirements. Candidates must be continuously registered in the Graduate College (a minimum of 1 cr. each fall and spring semester) until receipt of the PhD degree. Candidates who hold graduate assistantships or graduate research assistantships must also be registered during the summer terms (a minimum of 1 cr. in both the 8-week session and the 2nd 5-week session) until receipt of the degree. Failure to maintain continuous registration will result in the termination of Candidacy. Any student whose Candidacy has been terminated, and/or who does not have a Supervisor under whose direction the dissertation project is being pursued, shall be considered to be terminated as a student.

Dissertation and Final Oral Exam (Dissertation Defense)

The dissertation is not of fixed length; rather, the dissertation should treat in depth a subject from the candidate's field as approved by the Supervisory Committee. It should show the student's technical mastery of the field and should advance or modify former knowledge; i.e., it should treat new material, or find new results, or draw new conclusions, or it should interpret old material with new insights. Requirements regarding the content and format of the dissertation are provided in the document "Dissertation & Graduation Instructions for PhD Candidate (https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/_documents/dissertation-graduation-instructions-phd-candidates.pdf)s".

The dissertation and abstract are to be presented to the members of the Supervisory Committee at least 4 weeks before the Final Oral Exam (dissertation defense). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that, at that time, the dissertation has been properly formatted and has been thoroughly checked for errors in terminology, grammar and spelling. During the ensuing period of at least 2 weeks, the members of the Supervisory Committee will have the opportunity to review the dissertation to determine whether it is in a fit condition (based on formatting, writing quality and preliminary scientific criteria) for the dissertation defense. Upon receiving such approval, or if no serious objections are raised, the student must login to *Seguidor* to request official scheduling of the Final Oral Exam to occur **at least 2 weeks after submission of the request**. The student's Supervisory Committee should serve as the Examining Committee, although additional examiners may be included. The exam can be administered only upon approval by the student's Supervisor, Graduate Program Director and Dean for Graduate Studies. **The Final Oral Exam cannot be held until at least 7 months after admission to Candidacy. The final oral exam must be held and no more than 4 years after admission to Candidacy or 7 academic years after matriculation, whichever comes first.** Waivers to this window of opportunity for the Final Oral Exam require permission of the Dean for Graduate Studies and will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

The final examination is oral and public. It is administered by the Supervisory Committee after all other requirements have been met. The Supervisory Committee also determines the character and length

of the defense, while maintaining compliance with the guidelines and usual practices followed by the major program. The examination may be devoted to the special field of the dissertation or to related matters, or it may be designed to test the candidate's judgment and critical powers. The Chair of the Supervisory Committee and at least 2 other Graduate Faculty members of the Supervisory Committee must be available for the examination. Exceptions may be made only by permission of the Dean for Graduate Studies.

The report of the outcome of the exam must be filed (via *Seguidor*) within 7 days following the examination. If more than one Graduate Faculty member of the Supervisory Committee recommends failure, the student shall be considered to have failed the examination. In the event of failure, the Supervisory Committee shall recommend to the Dean for Graduate Studies whether the student should be given the option of retaking the examination and, if so, the Committee shall identify general areas of weakness that require special attention, and any specific remedial actions that the student should complete prior to re-examination. This information must be detailed in *Seguidor* when reporting the exam outcome, and will subsequently be transmitted in writing to the student. No student shall be permitted to take the final oral examination more than twice and the student must wait a minimum of 3 months before retaking the examination.

When the Final Oral Exam has been completed successfully, the final version of the dissertation must be submitted electronically to the DigitalCommons@UNMC.

Requirements for Completion of the PhD Degree in a Given Semester

Students who expect to complete degree requirements within a given semester must file an application for the diploma and pay the non-refundable \$50 fee by the date specified in the current academic calendar (generally, October 1 for December graduation, February 1 for May graduation, and June 1 for August graduation).

To meet requirements for completion of the degree in a given semester, the dissertation must have been successfully uploaded to the DigitalCommons@UNMC and the following graduation documentation must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office no later than 1 week prior to Commencement: *Report on Doctoral Degree* form, Certificates of Completion for 3 surveys (the UNMC Convocation & Accomplishments Survey, the UNMC Graduate Program Effectiveness & Student Satisfaction Survey, and the NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates), and proof of submission of at least a portion of the dissertation research to a peer-reviewed journal (see **Research Requirements**, above).

The timeline and procedures necessary to ensure student progress toward the PhD degree can be found at <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/index.html> (<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/programs/phd-timeline.html>).