

Academic Information

General Requirements for Master's Degrees in Arts & Sciences

The minimum requirement of the master's degree is 30 credits.

The master's degree program can require a master's thesis, make the thesis optional, or decline to offer a thesis. A thesis is always required for students who pursue a master's degree outside of their area of study for their intended PhD program. No more than 6 credits toward the terminal master's degree may be awarded for master's thesis research. No more than 15 units of master's thesis research may be applied to a master's degree earned en route to a PhD program. A master's thesis must be defended before a committee of no fewer than three faculty members. A master's degree without a thesis must include an examination that tests competence in the field of study. Degree programs are free to include additional requirements. Master's students must also maintain satisfactory academic progress and fulfill residence requirements.

Registration

Students newly admitted to graduate programs in Arts & Sciences receive information about creating a WUSTL Key (a university login identity credential) from the university registrar. The WUSTL Key is an account that is used to register for courses online via WebSTAC during open registration periods. All registrations require online approval by the student's faculty advisor and are monitored by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Credit Units

Full-time students register for 9 to 12 units per semester. Master's students who have completed their courses and need additional time to complete other degree requirements will be registered for LGS 9000 Full-time Graduate Research/Study.

Courses

To count toward a master's degree, courses must be offered at the graduate level, taken for a grade, and approved in advance by the student's advisor and program as eligible to count toward the student's degree. Graduate-level courses are designated by numbers in the 500s/5000s or above. Audited courses and courses taken with the satisfactory/unsatisfactory or Pass/Fail grading option may not be counted toward the degree or toward full-time status in a given semester. Students should consult their advisors regarding these options.

Grades

Credit-conferring grades for students in Arts & Sciences are as follows:

- A: outstanding (an A grade may be modified by a plus or minus)
- B: good (a B grade may be modified by a plus or minus)
- C: conditional (a C grade may be modified by a plus or minus)
- S: satisfactory (the S grade is used almost exclusively for credit units earned by doing research)
- U: unsatisfactory (the U grade is used almost exclusively for credit units earned by doing research)
- F: failing
- X: final examination missed
- I: incomplete

In the rare event that an instructor is unable to submit a grade by the grade deadline, an N, signifying that the grade has not yet been submitted, may temporarily appear as a transcript notation on the student's record. Grades that are not posted by the last day of classes of the following semester will result in these temporary notations being automatically changed to a grade of F (or, in the case of a course taken as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, to a grade of U).

Grades cannot be changed after the conferral of a student's degree.

The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, uses a 4-point scale for calculating grade point averages:

- A = 4
- B = 3
- C = 2

A plus adds 0.3 to the value of a grade, and a minus subtracts 0.3 from the value of a grade.

Grade Appeals

If a student believes a grade they have received — whether referring to a single assignment or to the course grade as a whole — is inappropriate, arbitrary, or assigned for nonacademic reasons, they have the right to discuss any grade(s) with their instructor and to request a change of grade(s). (Students wanting to discuss the possibility of appealing their grades are welcome to do so with their advisor or the Office of Graduate Studies academic affairs team. Connect with the Office of Graduate Studies at artscigrads@wustl.edu.)

Grade appeals should be filed as soon as possible after the grade is assigned and must be addressed in a timely manner. Grade appeals are not allowed after one semester has passed since the grade has been awarded. Grade appeals in the term prior to the student's graduation must be raised immediately and addressed on a truncated timeline from what is outlined below in order for the appeal to be addressed prior to the conferral of a degree. If a grade appeal is submitted after a student has graduated, it will not be reviewed, as no grade changes will be made to the academic record following conferral of a degree.

The below steps outline the grade appeal process:

- The student must first request the grade change from the instructor. The request should be in writing and outline the reasons the grade change is being requested. The instructor must respond to the student in writing with detailed justification for the grade given within two weeks of the student's request.

- If the student is not satisfied by the instructor's justification for the grade, they may appeal the grade in writing to the appropriate department chair or program director (based on the home department or program of the course and not on the student's program of enrollment) within one week of the instructor's response. The appropriate chair or director will review the appeal and provide a written response to the student within three weeks.
- A graduate student's last opportunity for appeal is to the Vice Dean of Graduate Education. If a student wants to pursue a grade appeal to this level, the appeal must be in writing and be submitted within one week of the written response from the chair. The Vice Dean of Graduate Education must respond within four weeks of the student's appeal, and the response must be in writing.

If a student believes that the grade is the result of identity-based discrimination, they should make a report through the Bias Report and Support System (<https://students.wustl.edu/bias-report-support-system/>).

Incomplete Grades

A student may be eligible for a grade of Incomplete if they experience medical or acute personal challenges that make the satisfactory completion of course work difficult or unlikely. The student may request a grade of Incomplete (I) from one or more instructors and must take the following steps with each instructor:

1. The student should meet with the instructor before the final examination or due date for the final paper/project to request the Incomplete.
2. If the instructor grants the Incomplete, the student and instructor should agree on the scope of the work remaining to complete the course and a date when it will be submitted. This date should be prior to the end of the next semester. The instructor should confirm with the student, in writing, the details of the work with respective deadlines.

Whether or not to grant an Incomplete is at the instructor's discretion. When determining whether to do so, the instructor should consider whether the student has consistently attended and engaged with the course (for example, whether the student has submitted all assignments except the final assignments/assessments) and made satisfactory progress in the course. Incompletes should not be granted unless the student has completed at least two-thirds of the assignments/assessments for the course.

If sufficient work has not been completed, the grade of Incomplete will not be feasible. In such situations, the instructor will submit whatever final grade the student has earned. The student may repeat the course at a later time if they choose. (For information about repeating a course, see below.)

If an Incomplete is granted, the work should be completed in the time frame agreed upon with the instructor. This time frame should not extend past the last day of classes of the following semester.

- Spring semester Incomplete grade: Deadline for resolution of Incomplete grade is the last day of classes in the summer semester
- Summer semester Incomplete grade: Deadline for resolution of Incomplete grade is the last day of classes in the fall semester
- Fall semester Incomplete grade: Deadline for resolution of Incomplete grade is the last day of classes in the spring semester

Failure to submit completed work within the relevant time frame will result in the grade of Incomplete being automatically changed to a grade of F (or, in the case of a course being taken as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, to a grade of U).

Further, students cannot have a grade of Incomplete on their transcripts when their degrees are conferred. Thus, students who are expecting to graduate at the end of the semester in which the course being considered for an Incomplete was taken should not request or be granted a grade of Incomplete.

Any student who does have an Incomplete on their transcript at the time of certification and degree conferral will have the Incomplete changed to a grade of F (or, in the case of a course being taken as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, to a grade of U).

Grades cannot be changed after the conferral of a student's degree.

Note: If an Incomplete is granted, students cannot be added to the Canvas shell of a subsequent offering of the course in order to complete the previous enrollment. Instead, at the instructor's request, the student can be given access to the original course shell, and the instructor can reopen assignments within that course shell. All work for an Incomplete should occur within the original course's Canvas course shell or outside of Canvas entirely.

Retaking a Course

Graduate students may be allowed to retake a course once with prior permission from their department or program. The department can refuse the student's request. If permission to retake a course is granted, both registrations will show on the transcript. The grade for the first enrollment will always be updated to include the symbol R, which will cause the grade calculation for the first enrollment to be removed from the grade point average calculations. Whether or not it is lower than or equal to the original grade, the grade for the second enrollment will be used to calculate the grade point average. The grade for the first enrollment will not be replaced with an R until the second enrollment is completed and its grade has posted. A student who retakes a course without prior permission might not receive permission retroactively. No student may use the retake option to replace a grade received as a sanction for violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. The R option may be invoked only once per course, and the original grade option must be retained.

Transferred Credits

A maximum of 6 credit units may ordinarily be transferred from an institution of recognized graduate standing toward the fulfillment of requirements for the master's degree from Washington University, except that a maximum of 15 credit units may be transferred toward the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) from institutions that have entered into special cooperative agreements with Washington University for this purpose.

Applications to transfer credits for a master's degree are not ordinarily approved until one full semester of study (12 credit units) has been completed at Washington University. Academic credits applied to complete requirements for the bachelor's degree are ordinarily not transferable toward the fulfillment of advanced degree requirements at Washington University. Likewise, academic credits counted toward requirements for any completed graduate degree are ordinarily not transferable toward a subsequent degree of equivalent or lower level.

Shared Credits With the PhD

The doctorate-granting department will determine a standardized practice to identify which courses will count toward the doctoral degree. Departments will demonstrate consistency with regard to which and how many units will apply from each master's discipline.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory academic progress is monitored by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, as well as by the degree program. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress may result in immediate dismissal or in placement on academic probation for a minimum of three months. Most financial awards and all federally funded awards are contingent on the maintenance of satisfactory academic progress. Moreover, satisfactory academic progress is a prerequisite for service on any committee authorized by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. The following are minimal standards of satisfactory academic progress for master's students; degree programs may set stricter standards but must not relax these.

1. Students are expected to proceed at a pace appropriate to enable them to finish within the time limits customary in their degree program. At most, students enrolled in master's degree programs have four calendar years, dated from their first registration in a graduate degree program at Washington University, to complete degree requirements.
2. Students are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in courses that count toward their credit units. (Note that plus and minus marks alter the numerical value of a letter grade.)
3. Students are expected not to carry at one time any more than 9 credit units for which an I (incomplete), X (final examination missed), or N (grade not yet submitted) are recorded. The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, may deny a student with more than 9 unfinished credits permission to register.

Residence Requirement

The residence requirement for master's degree students is that each student must spend at least one academic year registered for full-time credits (9 to 12 credits in the fall followed by 9 to 12 credits in the spring) at Washington University. Any exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. All daytime programs prefer that students remain full-time and in residence throughout their work toward the degree.

Thesis

The thesis topic is subject to approval by the master's student's faculty advisor and by the chair of the degree program. As soon as the thesis topic has been approved (but no later than six months before the thesis defense is likely to occur), students should submit the Title, Scope and Procedure form (<https://gradstudies.artsci.wustl.edu/forms/>) to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. It must be signed by the three-member committee before whom the student will defend the thesis as well as by the chair of the degree program. At least three members of the thesis committee must be Washington University faculty; at least two of them must be appointed in the master's student's degree program; and at least two of them (not necessarily the same two) must be tenured or tenure-track, including the committee chair or co-chair. Exceptions must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, or their designee.

A Master's Thesis Guide and a template (<https://gradstudies.artsci.wustl.edu/forms/>) that provide instructions regarding the format of the thesis are available on the website of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Both should be read carefully at every stage of thesis preparation.

The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, requires each student to make the full text of the thesis available to the committee members for their review at least one week before the defense. Most degree programs require two or more weeks for the review period; students should check with their faculty.

After the defense, the student must submit an electronic copy of the thesis online to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences via BePress at the university library. The degree program is responsible for delivering the Master's Thesis Approval form (PDF) (http://bulletin.wustl.edu/grad/artsci/masters/academic/Master_s_Final_Approval_Form_thesis_2020.pdf), signed by the committee members at the defense and then by the program chair, to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Students who defend their theses successfully have not yet completed their master's requirements; they finish earning the degree only when their thesis submission has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Graduation Information

Students are responsible for filing an Intent to Graduate form in order to have their earned master's degree conferred. The Intent to Graduate form is available online through WebSTAC (<https://acadinfo.wustl.edu>). Deadlines for filing an Intent to Graduate are

listed on the website of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences (<https://gradstudies.artsci.wustl.edu/>). No degree will be awarded if this form has not been filed. Students who do not complete their degree requirements by their intended graduation date must refile for the next graduation date.

Specific Circumstances

Changes in Program of Study

Students are usually admitted to graduate programs in Arts & Sciences to study toward specific degrees. Therefore, a change in the degree objective (e.g., from AM to PhD) is subject to the approval of both the student's program and the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. A request for a change in the subject of study (e.g., from economics to history) requires the approval of both programs concerned as well as that of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Students may be required to fill out a new application for admission before making such changes, but they will not be charged a second application fee.

Grade Appeals

If a student believes a grade they have received — whether referring to a single assignment or to the course grade as a whole — is inappropriate, arbitrary, or assigned for nonacademic reasons, they have the right to discuss this grade with their instructor and to request a change of the grade. (Students wanting to discuss the possibility of appealing their grades are welcome to do so with their advisor or with the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, academic affairs team. Connect with the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, at artscigrads@wustl.edu.)

Grade appeals should be filed as soon as possible after the grade is assigned and must be addressed in a timely manner. Grade appeals are not allowed after one semester has passed since the grade has been awarded. Grade appeals in the term prior to the student's graduation must be raised immediately and addressed on a truncated timeline from what is outlined below in order for the appeal to be addressed prior to the conferral of a degree. If a grade appeal is submitted after a student has graduated, it will not be reviewed, as no grade changes will be made to the academic record following conferral of a degree.

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3. A graduate student's last opportunity for appeal is to the Vice Dean of Graduate Education. If a student wants to pursue a grade appeal to this level, the appeal must be in writing and submitted within one week of the written response from the chair. The Vice Dean of Graduate Education must respond within four weeks of the student's appeal, and the response must be in writing.

If a student believes that the grade is the result of identity-based discrimination, they should make a report through the Bias Report and Support System (<https://students.wustl.edu/bias-report-support-system/>).

Student Grievances: Guidelines and Procedures

Students may encounter experiences in which they have legitimate complaints regarding academic matters or an interaction with a faculty member, staff member, or fellow student. It is important that students and faculty have a common understanding of how such complaints may be expressed and resolved.

Students with complaints regarding academic matters or interactions with a faculty member, staff member, or fellow student should initially seek resolution from their faculty advisor, then from their director of graduate studies, and finally from the chair of their degree program. Complaints that remain unresolved may be addressed to the Vice Deans of Graduate Education in the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) in Arts & Sciences. The Vice Deans may follow up with the complainant, with faculty in the student's degree program, or with other stakeholders on campus to review and investigate the grievance and to work toward a resolution. Faculty involved in the process of receiving or reviewing a complaint should treat the information and relevant conversations as highly confidential.

Students with complaints regarding nonacademic matters (including but not limited to unprofessional behavior, a hostile learning environment, and abusive or offensive language and/or behavior) — whether by faculty, staff, or fellow students — are first encouraged, depending on the severity of the alleged behavior, to seek resolution with the alleged offender(s). If a complainant is not comfortable with doing so or if the problem persists after they have done so, they should seek resolution from their faculty advisor, then from their director of graduate studies, and finally from the chair of their degree program. Complaints that remain unresolved may be addressed in several ways:

- *By the Ombuds:* The Offices of the Ombuds (<https://ombuds.wustl.edu/>) serve as confidential, independent, and impartial resources that offer assistance in the informal resolution of university-related conflicts and advocate for fair treatment and process.
- *By the OGS:* The OGS does not adjudicate matters of nonacademic student grievance. However, it can and should be used as a source of support, mediation, and advising for such matters.

- *By the Office of University Compliance:* Students with such complaints have the option of reporting suspected violations of the University Code of Conduct using the online form on the Office of University Compliance webpage (<https://universitycompliance.wustl.edu/>).

All complaints regarding academic and professional integrity should be first addressed to the respective department head(s). The department, with the counsel of the OGS, can submit a report of academic and professional integrity through the appropriate mechanism (i.e., the OGS for master's student concerns and the Vice Provost for Graduate Education Academic and Professional Integrity Officer for PhD concerns).

Washington University policies state that members of the university community can expect to be free from discrimination and harassment. Students, faculty, staff, and outside organizations working on campus are required to abide by specific policies prohibiting harassment. An allegation of discrimination or harassment may be appealed to the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, who will determine whether to convene the Title IX Grievance Committee to hear the case. Allegations of bias, prejudice, or discrimination should be reported using the Bias Report and Support System (<https://students.wustl.edu/bias-report-support-system/>). Visit the Discrimination and Harassment page (<https://hr.wustl.edu/items/discrimination-harassment-policy/>) on the Human Resources site for more information.

Leaves of Absence

Students who wish to suspend their graduate study should apply for a leave of absence. A student's application for a leave of absence must be endorsed by the degree program and then approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Such a leave may be personal or medical. In the case of a medical leave, the student must present authorization from the Habif Health and Wellness Center at both the beginning and again at the end of the leave. At the end of a leave of absence, a student is reinstated into the School of Arts & Sciences under the conditions prevailing at the time the leave was granted. Being on leave suspends full-time student status and financial support from the university. Taking a leave may, therefore, adversely affect loan deferment, visa status, the right to rent university-owned housing, and so on. Most visa types would prevent international students from remaining in the United States while taking a leave of absence; international students should consult the Office for International Students and Scholars (<https://students.wustl.edu/international-students-scholars/>) as well as their faculty advisor, their program's director of graduate studies, and the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, before taking a leave of absence.

Prior to taking a leave of absence, students should also consider their need for health insurance coverage. The continuation of student health insurance and access to the Habif Health and Wellness Center depends on such factors as the kind of leave (medical or personal), the length of time the student has already been covered during the current insurance year, and the student's location during the leave.

Students should consult the Habif Health and Wellness Center (<https://students.wustl.edu/habif-health-wellness-center/>) website for current policies with regard to leaves of absence; these policies may change annually if insurance carriers change.

Withdrawals

Students wishing to withdraw from their programs must give notice in writing by filling out the withdrawal form available on the Forms page (<https://gradstudies.arts.wustl.edu/forms/>) of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, where it can be found under the "Change to Enrollment Status" heading. This form must include the date upon which the withdrawal should be considered effective. Without such information, there may be serious financial repercussions for the student and/or the university. International students should contact their advisors in the Office for International Students and Scholars (<https://students.wustl.edu/international-students-scholars/>) before taking this action so that they can understand all potential visa and student status implications.

Dismissals

A program may wish to dismiss a student for a number of reasons, including willful misrepresentation to gain admission to graduate study, breaches of academic integrity, academic failure, or behavior destructive to the welfare of the academic community. Dismissals are recommended by the degree program and are not final until approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Any student who believes their dismissal was undeserved may appeal to the Vice Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, within 14 calendar days. Except for circumstances justifying immediate dismissal, a student may not be dismissed on the basis of academic performance without the opportunity to return to good standing during an identified period of probation.

For details of these or any other policies of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, please visit the Policies & Procedures page (<https://gradstudies.arts.wustl.edu/graduate-school-policies-and-procedures/>).

Interdisciplinarity

Dual Degree Programs

The university has set up numerous programs that permit students to earn two graduate and/or professional degrees at the same time. Two of these programs include an AM degree:

- Dual Master of Social Work/Master of Arts in Education
- Dual Juris Doctoris/Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, uses the term *dual degree* to identify instances when two separate programs of study share some common curricular elements and may allow a specified amount of double-counting. That is, courses or credits can count

toward the requirements for both programs. They have been designed and approved by either a cross-departmental or cross-school faculty committee, or separately by both schools' committees, who have agreed on the common elements.

Interested students must apply to and be admitted by each degree program separately, but ideally, all applications should be made before beginning graduate or professional study. Dual degrees are ordinarily conferred simultaneously after all requirements for both degrees have been met. For details of the programs listed above, students should consult the websites of the two disciplines.

Accelerated AB/Master's Program

The Accelerated AB/Master's program allows qualified Washington University undergraduates to complete a master's degree in a one-year accelerated program after completing the AB degree. The undergraduate and graduate degrees are awarded sequentially, with admission to the master's degree, if approved, for the fall semester following completion of the undergraduate degree in the preceding December, May, or August.

Applications must be submitted by March 15, and GRE tests are not required. The program is available only to students currently in their senior year and only for continuous enrollment in the next year. There is no option for deferred admissions. In order to complete a master's degree in one year, students may apply five courses taken at the 400/4000 level or above as an undergraduate (with a maximum of 16 units) toward master's degree programs that require 36 or more units for completion. For master's programs that require fewer than 36 units, three courses at the 400/4000 level or above (with a maximum of 12 units) may be applied. Master's programs requiring more than 36 units may require an additional semester or summer of enrollment. Undergraduate courses must be acceptable to the department or program offering the master's degree and must be completed with a final grade of B or higher. All admissions are provisional until the successful completion of the AB.

The actual awarding of each degree is contingent on the successful completion of all requirements for that degree. The application for admission must be made to the department, which forwards the application and the department's recommendation for admission to Arts & Sciences. There is no application fee. Students accepted into the program will retain their student ID numbers and will not need to replace their ID cards. In every other respect, they will be treated as new students in Arts & Sciences and should familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of this *Bulletin*.

Please consult the home department and the Information for Accelerated AB/Master's Degree Program Applicants for more detailed information.