

Stanford

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Summary

Details university requirements for master's degrees.

Rationale

Stanford University has authorized the granting of several different master's degrees: the Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.S.), Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), Master of Public Policy (M.P.P.), Master of Liberal Arts (M.L.A.), Master of Legal Studies (M.L.S.), Master of Laws (L.L.M.), Master of the Science of Law (J.S.M.), and Master of the Art of Teaching (M.A.T.). Currently the M.A.T. is not being offered.

Policy

In addition to completing the general requirements for advanced degrees and the requirements specified by their degree program, candidates for master's degrees must meet the general master's degree requirements and degree-specific requirements listed below. Degree programs may have additional requirements for the degree.

Authority:

- Committee on Graduate Studies (policy)
- [Office of the Registrar](#) [1] via Stanford Services & Support (implementation)
- Degree program offices (implementation)

Applicability:

Students pursuing and programs granting master's degrees: M.A., M.S., M.F.A., M.B.A., M.P.P., M.L.A., M.L.S., L.L.M., J.S.M., and M.A.T.

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1. Residency

Each type of graduate degree offered at Stanford has a residency requirement based on the number of academic units required for the degree. The university minimum requirement for each master's degree is 45 unduplicated units (30 semester units) of work done at Stanford for the M.A., M.S., M.F.A., M.L.A., and M.L.S. degrees; 90 units for the M.B.A. and M.P.P. degrees; and 35 units (26 semester units) for the L.L.M. and J.S.M. degrees (see [GAP 3.2 Residency Policy for Graduate Students](#) ^[2]).

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2. Advising

In the first quarter of enrollment in the program, the degree program assigns the student an advisor to assist in planning a program of study (see [GAP 3.3 Academic Advising](#) ^[3]).

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3. Master's Program Proposal

Students pursuing an M.A., M.F.A., M.P.P., or M.S. degree are required to submit an acceptable program proposal to their degree program during the first quarter of enrollment. Coterminal students must submit the proposal during the first graduate quarter (typically the quarter after admission to the master's program). The program proposal establishes a student's individual program of study to meet university and degree program requirements. Students who fail to submit an acceptable proposal may be dismissed.

The construction, review, and approval of the program proposal is a crucial process, as it confirms the student's understanding of the requirements for the degree and forms much of the basis for the degree program to later confer or deny conferral of the degree. The advisor assists the student in planning the program of study.

The program proposal should represent a coherent program of study that includes components to synthesize material covered and to allow for some degree of depth. Depending on the field of study and degree program interests, such a component could be a project, a long paper, a final examination, a sequencing of course work or seminars, or a research requirement.

In reviewing the program proposal or any subsequent amendment to it, the degree program confirms that:

1. the course of study proposed by the student fulfills all degree program course requirements (for example, requirements specifying total number of units, course levels, particular courses, sequences, or substitutes)
2. all other degree program requirements (for example, required projects, foreign language proficiency, or qualifying exams) are listed on the form
3. all general university requirements (minimum units, residency, and so on) for the master's degree will be met through the proposed program of study, including the following:
 - the proposed course of study must include the required number of units of Stanford course work not used to meet the requirements of any other degree
 - all required units must be in courses at the 100-level or above
 - 50 percent of those units must be in graduate-level courses (generally, at the 200-level or above)

- no units are awarded for course work completed elsewhere.

Students must amend the proposal formally with their degree program, on whatever form the program specifies, if their plans for meeting degree requirements change. Such changes must have received approval from the degree program, within the same rules listed above for approval of the initial proposal, before the student can be cleared for degree conferral.

In reviewing the program proposal or any subsequent amendment to it, the degree program confirms that all of the requirements listed above have been met.

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4. Time Limit for Completion of the Master's Degree

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within three years after the student's first term of enrollment in the master's program (five years for Honors Cooperative students). Students pursuing a coterminal master's degree must complete their requirements within three years of the first graduate quarter. Candidates for the M.L.A. degree must complete within five years.

The time limit is not automatically extended by a student's leave of absence. All requests for extension, whether prompted by a leave or some other circumstance, must be filed by the student before the conclusion of the program's time limit, using the [Application for Extension of Candidacy or Master's Program](#) [4] form. Degree programs are not obliged to grant an extension. The maximum extension is one additional year. Extensions require review of academic progress and any other factors regarded as relevant by the degree program, and approval by the degree program; such approval is at the degree program's discretion.

Failure to complete satisfactorily the academic requirements, including university and degree program requirements, within the established time limits may lead to dismissal (see [GAP 3.1 Registration, Enrollment, and Academic Progress](#) [5]).

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5. Requirements for Specific Types of Master's Degrees

Master of Arts and Master of Science

In addition to completing the general requirements for advanced degrees and the specified program requirements, candidates for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.) or Master of Science (M.S.) must outline an acceptable program of study on the [Master's Degree Program Proposal](#) [6] and complete their degrees within the time limit for completion of the master's degree.

Master of Business Administration

The degree of Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) is conferred on candidates who have satisfied the requirements established by the faculty of the Graduate School of Business and the general requirements for

advanced degrees. Full particulars concerning the school requirements are found on the Graduate School of Business [M.B.A. website](#) [7]. The M.B.A. must be completed within the time limit for completion of the master's degree.

Master of Fine Arts

In addition to completing the general requirements for advanced degrees and the program requirements specified in the "Art and Art History" section of the Stanford Bulletin, candidates for the degree of Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) must outline an acceptable program of study on the Master's Degree Program Proposal and complete their degrees within the time limit for completion of the master's degree.

Master of Public Policy

The degree of Master of Public Policy (M.P.P.) is a two-year program leading to a professional degree. Enrollment in the M.P.P. program is limited to candidates who have earlier been accepted to another Stanford graduate degree program and to recent (within three years) Stanford graduates. In addition to completing the general requirements for advanced degrees and the program requirements specified in the "Public Policy" section of the Stanford Bulletin, candidates for the degree of Master of Public Policy (M.P.P.) must outline an acceptable program of study on the [Master's Degree Program Proposal](#) [6] and complete their degrees within the time limit for completion of the master's degree.

Master of Liberal Arts

In addition to completing the general requirements for advanced degrees, candidates for the degree of Master of Liberal Arts (M.L.A.) must complete their degrees within five years (an exception to the rule specified above).

Master of Legal Studies

The Master of Legal Studies degree (M.L.S.), a nonprofessional degree, is conferred upon candidates who satisfactorily complete courses in law totaling the number of units required under the current Faculty Regulations of the Stanford Law School over not less than one academic year and who otherwise have satisfied the requirements of the university and the Stanford Law School (see Stanford Law School Student Handbook for detailed information on degree requirements).

Master of Laws

The degree of Master of Laws (L.L.M.) is conferred upon candidates who satisfactorily complete courses in law totaling the number of units required under the current Faculty Regulations of the Stanford Law School over not less than one academic year and who otherwise have satisfied the requirements of the university and the Stanford Law School. The degree is designed for foreign graduate students trained in law and is available only to students with a primary law degree earned outside the United States. See Stanford Law School Student Handbook for detailed information on degree requirements.

Master of the Science of Law

The degree of Master of the Science of Law (J.S.M.) is conferred upon candidates who satisfactorily complete courses in law totaling the number of units required under the current Faculty Regulations of the Stanford Law School over not less than one academic year and who otherwise have satisfied the requirements of the university and the Stanford Law School.

The degree is primarily designed for those qualified students who hold a J.D. or its equivalent and who are at the Stanford School of Law for independent reasons (for example, as teaching fellows) and who wish to combine work

toward the degree with their primary academic activities. See Stanford Law School Student Handbook for detailed information on degree requirements.

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Related Content:

Related Policies

- [GAP 3.1 Registration, Enrollment, and Academic Progress](#) [5]
- [GAP 3.2 Residency Policy for Graduate Students](#) [2]
- [GAP 3.3 Academic Advising](#) [3]
- [GAP 4.2 Coterminal Degrees](#) [8]
- [GAP 6.1 Graduate Tuition Categories](#) [9]

Related Bulletin Sections

- [Degree-Specific Requirements \(Master's Degrees\)](#) [10]

Related Information and Forms

- [Program Proposal for a Master's Degree](#) [6]
- [Application for Extension of Candidacy or Master's Program](#) [4]
- [Graduate School of Business M.B.A. website](#) [7]
- [Stanford Law School Student Handbook](#) [11]

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Links

[1] https://stanford.service-now.com/services?id=services_portal_home

[2] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-3/subchapter-2/page-3-2-1>

[3] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-3/subchapter-3/page-3-3-1>

[4] <https://registrar.stanford.edu/application-extension-candidacy-or-masters-program>

[5] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-3/subchapter-1/page-3-1-1>

[6] <https://registrar.stanford.edu/program-proposal-masters-degree>

[7] <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/programs/mba/academic-experience>

[8] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-2/page-4-2-1>

[9] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-6/subchapter-1/page-6-1-1>

[10] <https://bulletin.stanford.edu/academic-policies/graduate-degrees#master-s>

[11] <https://law.stanford.edu/office-of-student-affairs/student-handbook/>