

The Office of Graduate Education may initiate a departmental review of any student who has accumulated 36 or more credits on a master's degree program (66 or more for the Master of Business Administration) without satisfying degree requirements unless the individual's Plan of Study has been approved for more than 36 (66) credits. The review will consider whether the student should be dropped from the graduate program.

### **Thesis, Projects, and Professional Projects**

Certain departments may specify presentation of a thesis or completion of a master's project as a requirement for a master's degree. Usually six, and no more than nine, credit hours are allowed for a master's thesis or multiple semester master's project. Professional projects are completed in one semester and are limited to four credit hours for each project.

In a department that ordinarily requires a thesis or project, a student may be permitted to substitute additional courses that constitute a comparable culminating experience on recommendation of the adviser and with the approval of the department chair.

The thesis or project report must be presented to the candidate's adviser for review at least two weeks before the end of the term in which the degree is to be awarded. Any final examination on the thesis or project is to be held by the date listed in the academic calendar for the year. Theses and certain multiple semester projects are graded either S (satisfactory) or U (failed). Professional projects and certain other multiple semester projects receive a standard letter grade.

The candidate must deposit a copy of the thesis (or certain multiple-semester projects), together with the adviser's written approval of both content and format, at the Office of Graduate Education at least one week before the end of classes in the term in which the degree is to be awarded. The Office of Graduate Education must certify that the approved document has been deposited before the degree is awarded. Only work meeting the highest standards of integrity will be accepted for degree requirements at Rensselaer. Academic integrity is a requirement of continued good academic standing and for the awarding of a graduate degree.

## **Doctoral Degree**

Rensselaer awards the doctor's degree in recognition of high achievement in scholarship and independent investigation. The Doctor of Philosophy degree, under the auspices of the Office of Graduate Education, is awarded when the dissertation is directed toward making an original contribution to fundamental knowledge in a particular field or in an interdisciplinary field. A dissertation that is scholarly, creative, original, and publishable may deal also with the relation of a discipline to educational problems and objectives within the field. The Doctor of Engineering degree, under the auspices of the Professional School of the School of Engineering, is awarded when the student proposes an engineering problem of substance and develops a solution to it in a creative and distinguished manner.

### **Office of Graduate Education Requirements**

A candidate for the doctor's degree must:

- complete a Plan of Study with satisfactory grades containing 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree including any appropriate work completed toward a master's degree. In satisfying this requirement at least two-thirds of the total credit hours, excluding thesis, must contain the suffix numbers 6000-6999, with the further limitation that no more than 21 credit hours of 4000-4990 courses are to be allowed.
- Satisfy residence requirements.
- Form an approved doctoral committee.
- Pass a candidacy examination.

- Present an independently written (single author) dissertation.
- Pass a final examination.
- Pursue a Plan of Study that will lead to the completion of all requirements, including those of his or her department, within seven years.
- Satisfy the binding fee requirement.
- File a degree application with the Registrar's Office by the date specified in the academic calendar for the semester in which he or she plans to be graduated. If a degree application was filed for a previous semester but the requirements were not fulfilled, a new degree application must be filed for the semester in which the student actually is graduated.
- Be in good academic and disciplinary standing.

To be eligible to graduate, degree candidates must have either: maintained continuous full-time registration; maintained continuous full-time registration following a change of status from part-time to full-time; or been, at all times, a part-time student. Under no circumstances will a full-time student be allowed to transfer to part-time status and maintain eligibility for graduation.

Full-time degree candidates must be registered full-time during the semester in which they intend to graduate.

### **Residence and Time Limit**

A student working for the doctor's degree is required to take at least 45 credit hours of course and/or thesis work at the Troy campus. Residency requirements for the Troy campus may also be met within programs at certain off-campus sites (branch campuses).

For full-time students, all work for the doctorate must be completed within seven years of registration for the first credits applied toward the 90 credits required for the Ph.D. All doctoral candidates must pass the appropriate examinations as determined by their department within two years of registration for the first credits applied toward the Ph.D. Full-time students entering with a master's degree in their field of study must finish all degree requirements for the PhD within a continuous five-year time period. Students who have not met their applicable time limit will be dismissed from the program unless the Office of Graduate Education has given advanced approval for additional time to complete the degree. Extensions are granted for only the most compelling reasons and are extremely rare.

Individuals who leave Rensselaer without obtaining an authorized leave of absence and who have not requested an extension before the seven-year limit will be dismissed from the program. Individuals who do receive authorized leaves because of serious illness, involuntary military service, or maternity leave can, with the submission of the medical or military documentation, request the Office of Graduate Education to exclude up to two years of authorized leave time from the seven-year limit.

### **Doctoral Committee**

The chair of the student's department assigns a temporary adviser to guide the student until a doctoral committee can be appointed. As soon as the student has chosen a dissertation area, he or she must arrange to conduct the dissertation work with a dissertation adviser who is a full-time tenure-track member of the faculty. The dissertation adviser then consults with the chair of the student's department regarding the nomination of a doctoral committee of at least four members. The department chair sends the nominations to the Office of Graduate Education, which approves the doctoral committee.

The committee must include at least four full-time tenure-track Rensselaer faculty members. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by both the department chair and the Dean of Graduate Education. One committee member must be outside the student's department; the outside member may also be an additional fifth member, from outside the university if approved by the department chair. The committee members represent the principal areas included in the student's Plan of Study. They assume responsibility for this plan and also for the student's candidacy and final examinations.

## Plan of Doctoral Study

A prospective candidate for the doctorate ordinarily follows a Plan of Study of a minimum of 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree, including any appropriate work completed toward a master's degree.

## Candidacy

A student may apply for the candidacy examination, given by the doctoral committee, when:

- His or her course work nears completion.
- He or she has the approval of the doctoral committee.

This examination determines if the student has made satisfactory progress. Certain departments require their graduate students to pass preliminary examinations before the candidacy examination is taken.

A student is admitted to candidacy for the doctorate when he or she has passed the candidacy examination and received formal approval for such candidacy from his or her doctoral committee and department. When these requirements are met, the chair of the doctoral committee should notify the Office of Graduate Education of the student's candidacy. All degree requirements must be completed within three years of admission to candidacy.

## Dissertation and Final Examination

The doctoral dissertation demonstrates the candidate's capacity for independent work. It embodies the results of an original investigation in the candidate's principal field of study on a subject approved by the student's doctoral committee. Only work meeting the highest standards of integrity will be accepted for degree requirements at Rensselaer. Academic integrity is a requirement of continued good academic standing and for the awarding of a graduate degree. The field of the dissertation should be chosen as soon as possible after entry upon doctoral study. A manual, *Thesis Writing*, containing required format specifications, is available from the department, the Office of Graduate Education, or on the Web on the Office of Graduate Education's home page at <http://www.rpi.edu/dept/grad/gradschool.html>.

The dissertation is presented to the candidate's dissertation adviser at least one month before the end of the term in which it is expected that the degree will be awarded. Each member of the doctoral committee must be presented with an unbound copy of the dissertation at least one week before the final examination is scheduled.

**Dissertation Defense/Final Examination** When the dissertation is completed, the candidate must defend it in a public examination conducted by his or her doctoral committee, which passes on its acceptability. The final examination is to be held by the date listed in the academic calendar for the year. The committee transmits a record of its decision on the dissertation examination to the Office of Graduate Education.

**Dissertation Submission** After passing the final examination and no later than two weeks before the end of the term in which the degree is expected to be awarded, the candidate must deposit at the Office of Graduate Education two original copies of the dissertation in its final form including the required format specifications. A copy of the abstract, no longer than 350 words or 2,450 characters, with an abstract title page also must be included. The dissertation should be placed in a manila envelope with a copy of the title page on the front side. The original copy of the abstract with an abstract title page also must be included. The abstract title page should be the same as the dissertation title page except for the words "An Abstract of a Dissertation" etc. added. The title page for the dissertation must have the original signatures of the members of the doctoral committee. A Thesis/Project Examination Form, approving both content and format, signed by the chair of the doctoral committee must accompany these. The Office of Graduate Education must certify that the approved dissertation has been deposited before the degree can be awarded.

**Publication of Dissertation** Before the candidate is certified for graduation, he or she must pay a dis-

sertation fee to cover the costs of microfilming, publication of the abstract, and binding two original copies for preservation and use in the general library. A copy of the microfilm is deposited in the Library of Congress, and the abstract is published in the monthly journal, *Dissertation Abstracts*. Copies of the dissertation on microfilm and the journal then are available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The forms to be filled out for this purpose are available in the Office of Graduate Education and may be completed either prior to or at the time the dissertation is submitted.

A student who wishes to publish or present publicly any portion of his or her dissertation before it has been accepted in fulfillment of his or her degree requirement must have the permission of the adviser or chair of his or her doctoral committee. Any dissertation material so presented must include the following statement: "This paper is taken in part from a dissertation to be submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute."

The right of conventional publication is in no way abridged by microfilming, and the student is urged to seek additional publication in technical journals or elsewhere.

## Academic Credit

### Units of Credit

Academic credit is assigned in terms of credit hours. For formal course work, one credit hour represents one lecture or recitation hour or one laboratory period per week for one term. Approximately three hours of endeavor per week, both in and out of class, are associated with each credit hour. Contact hours are the number of class hours per week. When the number of contact hours differs from the credit hours for a course, the course description so indicates.

**Students Entering Rensselaer as Freshmen** Incoming freshmen may be eligible for advanced placement or advanced standing.

**Advanced Placement** The student should request the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to send Advanced Placement (AP) scores to the Registrar's Office at Rensselaer. The scores are evaluated and notice of the decision is sent to the student. Credit is granted, but there is no grade assigned and the credit is not included in calculating the grade point average (GPA).

**Advanced Standing** Credit may be granted for college-level work taken while in high school. Transfer credit will not be given for any college courses taken while in high school if these courses are used in obtaining the high school diploma. One exception is the matriculated student who attends college full time and transfers back credits to complete the high school diploma. This rule does not exclude the possibility of placement in a higher level of a subject area without being given academic credit for the placement. "Placement" in this case does not refer to the Educational Testing Service Advanced Placement Tests, which are accepted at the Institute depending on the level of score.

After admission, the student should have an official copy of a transcript from the college sent to the Registrar's Office at Rensselaer along with a copy of the course description for each course. The appropriate academic department evaluates the material. If acceptable, it is posted on the student's record and a copy of that record is sent to the student. No grade is given and it is not included in calculating the GPA.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute does not accept the College Level Entrance Program (CLEP) for credit.

**Undergraduate Students Entering Rensselaer from Another College** Students entering Rensselaer from another college must apply to the Office of Transfer Admissions. The Office of Transfer Admissions notifies the student of the results of preliminary evaluation and requests the student to send a final tran-