

A graduate student who wishes to change from one curriculum or department to another must file a Graduate Change of Status form, available at the Registrar's Office. This change requires approval of the chairpersons involved and of the Office of Graduate Education. When further information is needed before a change can be approved, the student may be requested to follow graduate admission application procedures.

Courses and Grade Requirements

Courses offered for graduate credit bear the suffix numbers 4000-9990. However, those designated by 4000-4990 are open for credit to both graduates and advanced undergraduates, and there are limitations on the number of such courses that may be applied to a graduate degree. Undergraduate courses below the 4000 level may not be used for credit toward graduate degrees. Also, graduate students are not permitted to take courses on a Pass/No Credit basis.

The minimum average of all grades used for credit toward an advanced degree must be B. If a student's grades fall below a B average, the Office of Graduate Education may request that the department conduct a formal review to determine whether continuation is warranted. The student's adviser, committee, or department may recommend to the Office of Graduate Education that the student whose performance is unsatisfactory be dropped from the graduate program. A student who has accumulated two failing grades will be dropped from the graduate program.

Satisfactory Performance

Continuation in the graduate program requires satisfactory performance on the part of the student. Satisfactory performance is not limited to the academic record, but includes other appraisals of the student's record and ability.

Substitutions for Required Courses

Substitutions for required courses are permitted only with the approval of the heads of the departments concerned and the Office of Graduate Education. Where substitutions are granted, written notice must be filed with the registrar.

Plan of Study

The graduate program is flexible and affords each student an opportunity to plan a course of study suited to his or her own objectives. To assure a coherent program in accord with the student's maturing capacities and aims, each student is to maintain, with the adviser's assistance, a Plan of Study for the degree for which he or she is studying.

The Plan of Study should be submitted during the student's second full-time semester. To be considered valid, the Plan of Study requires the approval of the adviser and the designated departmental person. The Plan of Study is to be prepared on the forms provided by the Office of Graduate Education. Upon approval by the adviser and the designated departmental person, the department will transmit the original to the registrar, with copies going to the Office of Graduate Education, the student, and the adviser. The student should also keep a copy for himself or herself.

Each student who has filed a Plan of Study should register in the usual manner and in accordance with the plan. If there are any significant changes, a revised Plan of Study must be submitted promptly following the same procedure outlined above.

Master's Degree

A student is admitted to study for the master's degree when the student's record indicates ability to do advanced work in that field. When a student decides to do graduate work in a field different from the

undergraduate degree, however, the department may require him or her to establish additional background by taking certain undergraduate courses.

The Master of Science degree is under the auspices of the Office of Graduate Education. The Professional School in the School of Engineering provides the Master of Engineering degree. The professional Master of Architecture degree is provided by of the School of Architecture and the Master of Business Administration degree is provided by the Lally School of Management and Technology. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences provides the Master of Fine Arts.

Office of Graduate Education Requirements

A candidate for a master's degree must:

- Complete a Plan of Study, approved by the department with satisfactory grades. The master's requires 30 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree. Certain programs have been specifically approved for additional credit hours, (e.g., the MBA and MFA require 60 credit hours). At least half the total credit hours presented toward the degree must have the suffix numbers 6000-6990, with the further limitation that no more than 15 credits of 4000-4990 courses are to be allowed.

- Satisfy residence requirements.

- Present an independently written (single author) thesis or project, if required.

- Pursue a Plan of Study that will lead to the completion of all requirements, including those of the department, within two and one-half years.

- Pay binding fee, if applicable.

- 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.

Degree candidates who at any point in their tenure at Rensselaer are, or become, full-time students must maintain continuous full-time registration throughout their Rensselaer academic career to be eligible to graduate. These students must be registered full-time during the semester in which they intend to graduate, and:

- Be in good academic and disciplinary standing.

- Satisfy the culminating experience requirement as specified by the department.

A student pursuing more than one master's degree at Rensselaer must meet the above requirements for each degree sought.

Residence and Time Limit

A student working for a master's degree is required to be registered for at least two terms and to complete a minimum of 24 credit hours of resident instruction for each master's degree sought. Department residency must be met in addition to the Office of Graduate Education requirements. Residency requirements for the Troy campus may also be met within programs offered at certain off-campus sites (branch campuses).

For full-time students, all work for a master's degree, whether done at Rensselaer or elsewhere, must be completed within two and one-half years of registration for the first credits applied toward the master's degree. Full-time students not fulfilling the master's degree requirements by the end of two and one-half years will be dismissed 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 rare. If approved, the student must register full-time for any additional terms and tuition is charged at the normal full-time rate. The student must be in good academic standing and have an acceptable Plan of Study. Satisfactory performance is not limited to academic record, but includes other appraisal of the student's record and ability.

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.