GRADUATION AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Summary of Requirements for the Graduate Degree

1. Admission to degree candidacy, if required by the program.
2. Completion of all requisite courses and credits with a cumulative average of 3.00, and compliance with specific GPA requirements as stipulated by the individual degree program.
3. Satisfactory performance on a final written and/or oral comprehensive examination conducted by the student's advisory committee in the field of specialization, if applicable. It is the candidate's responsibility to determine if this is required by their program and to apply for this examination by the prescribed deadlines.
4. Submission and approval of the thesis, research report, dissertation, or capstone project in those programs requiring it.
5. Fulfillment of any special examinations, requirements, or competencies that are unique to a department or program.
6. Fulfillment of all financial obligations to the University, including payment of the graduation fee, and of all other obligations, including the return of University property.
7. Compliance with all academic requests from the Dean of The Graduate School.

Additional Requirements for the Master of Education Degree

In addition to fulfilling these requirements, candidates for certain master of education degrees must give evidence of successful teaching experience approved by the department chairperson. Other experiences in lieu of this requirement must be approved by the relevant department and the Dean of The Graduate School.

The Comprehensive (Area of Specialization) Examination

A comprehensive examination covers the student's major field and is constructed, administered, and evaluated by the faculty of the student's major department or program. Candidates are responsible to know the deadlines and conditions for the examination and must apply to the program graduate coordinator or chair. Generally, students are not eligible to take the examination prior to the semester in which all courses in the major discipline are completed.

Research Requirements

Students should consult specific programs to determine whether independent study directed toward either the thesis or a research report is required, offered optionally, or omitted.

Application for Graduation

Each candidate for a graduate degree must apply to graduate on RamPortal (https://experience.elluciancloud.com/wcuop/). An automatic fee of $99 will be added to their account. The following are deadline dates for applying to graduate:

- May graduation - February 1
- August graduation - June 1
- December graduation - October 1

Master's and Doctoral Thesis, Dissertation, and Culminating Projects

Students completing a master's or doctoral thesis, dissertation, or culminating project must adhere to the following policies.

REQUIREMENTS

WCU recognizes discipline-specific master's and doctoral theses, dissertations and culminating projects including, but not limited to, empirical research, non-empirical research, action-research, and creative works. Students should seek guidance from their department/program for specific requirements.

REGISTRATION

Students should register their thesis, dissertation or culminating project with The Graduate School as early as possible, preferably a semester before their intended graduation term. Students can find registration information on The Graduate School website.

FORMATTING AND STYLE

Theses, dissertations, and culminating projects at WCU generally adhere to standard scholarly styles. The student's academic department/program will designate the style manual (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.) to be used. Style manuals provide detail on formats and students should use them consistently throughout the document including the reference pages and appendices. The only exception to this is the preliminary pages, which use the same standard formatting for all WCU master's and doctoral programs. Refer to The Graduate School website for the preliminary page and document formatting requirements.

RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

Students completing projects involving human subjects must obtain approval from WCU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). For projects involving animal subjects, students must obtain approval from WCU's Institutional and Animal Care Committee. Students who are going to work with human research participants are required to take the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training. Students can find information on CITI on the IRB website.

COMMITTEES

Master's thesis committee membership includes the thesis chair and a minimum of two additional members. The thesis chair must be a faculty member from the same program of study in which the student presenting the thesis is enrolled. At least one other committee member must also be a faculty member of the student's program. A qualified individual approved by the thesis chair from a different department or from outside the University may serve on the committee as a required third member. Additional committee members are permitted if there is a need for content expertise. Part-time or temporary faculty members may be approved by the department for committee membership but may not serve as thesis chair.

Doctoral dissertation and culminating project committee membership includes a chair, who must be a faculty member from the same program of study in which the student presenting the dissertation or project is enrolled. The remaining committee membership requirements are program specific.

The completed thesis, dissertation or culminating project must be successfully defended and/or approved by the committee per departmental/program requirements.

SUBMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE

Upon successful presentation or defense of a thesis, dissertation or culminating project, the student must properly format and submit the final document to The Graduate School along with the signed Approval Page through the online submission process. Submission links are available on The Graduate School's website. The Graduate School will conduct a general format and compliance review and send any necessary edit requests to the student's WCU e-mail account. After the review is complete and any applicable edits have been made, the Graduate Dean will sign off for official acceptance by The Graduate School. Submission deadlines for each academic term will be set by The Graduate School and will be available on the Graduate School website. For degree

conferral, students must submit both the Approval Page and the final document to The Graduate School.

PUBLISHING

WCU publishes theses, dissertations and culminating projects on Digital Commons. WCU will not publish a document in its entirety without student consent. Students have the right to have only their abstracts published and may choose to embargo the document (i.e., restrict access for a certain period of time). WCU reserves the right to publish abstracts only.

COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

WCU requires a signed publishing agreement upon submission to The Graduate School through Digital Commons. This agreement grants the WCU Library the right to publish a thesis, dissertation or culminating project on the university's website. Students are required to observe all applicable federal and state laws and university requirements regarding copyrighting and intellectual property. No copyrighted material should be submitted as part of a thesis, dissertation or culminating project unless all appropriate permissions have been granted with documentation to support its inclusion. Please see the following website for more guidance: Copyright & Intellectual Policy. (https://www.wcupa.edu/_admin/provost/copyright.aspx)

Submitting a Thesis or Doctoral Culminating Project

After approval by the examining committee and Dean of The Graduate School, theses and doctoral culminating projects must be submitted in accordance with specifications outlined on The Graduate School (http://www.wcupa.edu/grad/) website.