

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 myWCU (<https://my.wcupa.edu>). 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 Theses and Doctoral Culminating Projects

Students completing a master's thesis or doctoral culminating project are bound by the following policies.

REQUIREMENTS

WCU recognizes discipline-specific master's theses and doctoral 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 must register their master's thesis or doctoral culminating project with The Graduate School. Students should register as early as possible, preferably a semester before their intended graduation term. Registration occurs through completion of the "Registration and Research Compliance Form." This form is required of all students, regardless of the type of thesis or doctoral project being conducted.

FORMATTING AND STYLE

Style

Master's theses and doctoral culminating projects at WCU generally adhere to standard scholarly styles. The style manual (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.) is designated by the student's academic department/program. Style manuals provide detail on formats and should be consistently used throughout the document including the reference pages and appendices. The only exception to this is the preliminary pages, which are standard for all programs.

Margin Settings and Justification

Margins (top, right, and bottom) should be 1 inch all around. All pages should be left-justified with ragged right margins unless a creative work requires a different format.

Pagination

Beginning with the first page of the manuscript, following the preliminary pages, all pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript with (1, 2, 3, etc.), including the reference list and the appendices and should be consistent in placement throughout the manuscript. Pages should not begin or end with a single line of a paragraph or word.

Divisions

The manuscript should follow a logical scheme consistently throughout the work. Chapters are the most common division with sub-headings within as dictated by the style manual used. Typically, each chapter begins on a new page, whereas sub-headings typically do not. The general text should be doubled-spaced.

Font

A font of Times New Roman, size 12 is required on the preliminary pages and recommended (but not required) in the subsequent sections of the document. The font and size should be consistent throughout the document. The use of bolding, italics, capitalizations, and other writing conventions should be consistent and follow the appropriate style manual.

Preliminary Pages (templates available at <http://www.wcupa.edu/thesisdoc> (<http://www.wcupa.edu/thesisdoc/>))

WCU adheres to a standard set and order of preliminary pages, which includes the following:

- Title Page
- Dedication (optional)
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if required)
- List of Figures (if required)

RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

Students completing projects involving human subjects must obtain approval from WCU's Institutional Review Board. For projects involving animal subjects, students must obtain approval from WCU's Institutional and Animal Care Committee. Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) is required of all WCU researchers who work with human participants. To aid in research compliance, all students completing a master's thesis or doctoral culminating project must complete a "Registration and Research Compliance Form." This form is required of all students, regardless of the type of thesis or doctoral project being conducted.

COMMITTEES

Master's thesis committee membership includes the thesis chair and a minimum of two additional members. The master's thesis chair must be a faculty member from the same program of study that the student presenting the thesis is enrolled in. 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 culminating project committee membership includes a chair, who must be a faculty member from the same program of study that the student presenting the project is enrolled in. The remaining committee membership requirements are program specific.

The completed master's thesis or doctoral culminating project must be successfully defended and/or approved by the committee per departmental/program requirements.

SUBMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE

When a master's thesis or doctoral culminating project has been approved by the committee, the final document must be submitted to The Graduate School through the online submission process. Submission links are available at <http://www.wcupa.edu/thesisdoc> (<http://www.wcupa.edu/thesisdoc/>). A general format, and compliance review is conducted. After the review is complete and any applicable edits made, the Graduate Dean will sign off for official acceptance. Submission deadlines are: last full week in July (for August degree conferral); last full week in November (for December degree conferral); or last full week in April (for May degree conferral). The exact date, on a weekday that the university is open, will be set by The Graduate School and available at <http://www.wcupa.edu/thesisdoc> (<http://www.wcupa.edu/thesisdoc/>).

PUBLISHING

WCU publishes all master's thesis and doctoral projects on Digital Commons through the master's thesis and doctoral culminating project collection. Students have the right to determine embargo periods, as well as only have their abstract publishable. WCU reserves the right to only publish abstracts. A student's thesis or doctoral project will not be published in its entirety without student consent.

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 your master's thesis or doctoral culminating project on the university's website. You 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 master's thesis or doctoral 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.