NON-THESIS INSTRUCTION PACKET

GRADUATE PROGRAMS for ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Est. 1909

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

Revised 2017
Dear Master’s Degree Student:

Congratulations on your accomplishments so far!

This instruction packet is intended to assist you in completing the final steps of your master’s degree program. Please read it thoroughly and if you have questions, contact your academic counselor in the Graduate College at (405) 325-3811 or email gradinfo@ou.edu. We are here to assist you.

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PART I – CHECKLIST for DEGREE COMPLETION

STEP 1: PROGRAM of STUDY

During your first semester of graduate study, consult the graduate liaison of your academic unit to select, or be assigned, an advisor. Consult with your graduate liaison and/or advisor to discuss departmental procedures for planning your program of study and forming a committee. Check the master’s degree requirements for your academic unit and review the Graduate College Bulletin for enrollment standards.

Complete the Program of Study. You can obtain this form from the Graduate College website. Obtain the signature of the graduate liaison in your academic unit, and submit this form to the Graduate College at least one semester prior to your final/graduating semester, no later than the deadlines below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you intend to graduate in:</th>
<th>Submit your forms no later than:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>First Monday in March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>First Monday in April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>First Monday in October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your graduate program may set an earlier deadline. If you are a graduate assistant receiving a Graduate College tuition waiver, in order to remain eligible for the waiver, you will need to submit this form after completing a certain number of hours at OU.

STEP 2: APPLY for GRADUATION

The online graduation application is a requirement for all graduate degrees. If you fail to apply for graduation, conferral of your degree will be delayed until the semester in which you do apply for graduation.

Apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which you intend to complete the degree, no later than the deadlines indicated on the Academic Calendar. Instructions are available from the Graduation Office.

If you do not apply by the appropriate deadline, your name may not appear in the Commencement booklet at graduation. If you experience any difficulties completing the online graduation application, please contact the Office of Academic Records at (405) 325-4147.

STEP 3: SCHEDULE YOUR NON-THESIS (COMPREHENSIVE) EXAM

A majority of OU non-thesis master’s degree programs require a culminating non-thesis examination. Work completed for the non-thesis examination should be the result of your individual effort. All graduate students should be familiar with A Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity at the University of Oklahoma.

Because the non-thesis examination is comprehensive, you should complete all required or core courses and at least 75 percent of all coursework listed on your approved Program of Study before taking the exam. A student who has not completed this coursework as recommended is not normally granted authority to take the exam. Please note that a student may not appeal an unsatisfactory result of the non-thesis exam on the basis that they had not completed all required or core coursework and 75 percent of overall coursework as recommended by the Graduate College.

You will need to work with your department to select an examination date and time when all committee members can be present. The non-thesis examination should be held on or before the deadline indicated on the Academic Calendar. The exam may not be held during the period of final course examinations, nor may it be held while the university is not in session.
**STEP 4: OBTAIN AUTHORITY for EXAM**

Please see the *Graduate College Bulletin* for complete information regarding the non-thesis exam.

Contact your academic department so that they may request the authority form for your non-thesis exam. The graduate liaison should make a written/email request to the Graduate College, which should include your name, student ID, date of the exam, and names of your committee chair and other committee members. This request for authority should be sent to the Graduate College at least five (5) business days prior to the exam.

(Certain programs in which the non-thesis exam requirement is fulfilled by completion of a graduate capstone course should contact the Graduate College within the first two (2) weeks of the semester to request authority for all students who intend to complete the exam that semester.)

The Graduate College will review your status to determine your eligibility for the non-thesis exam:

1) You must be admitted to candidacy by the Graduate College, and your *Program of Study* must be up to date. Any changes to this form must be approved by the Graduate College before your exam can be authorized.

2) You need to be enrolled in at least two (2) hours of graduate-level coursework for the semester in which you intend to take the non-thesis exam.

3) You cannot be on academic probation at the time you take the non-thesis exam.

4) Your committee must meet the non-thesis examination committee selection criteria outlined in the *Graduate College Bulletin*.

If all of the above criteria have been met, then the Graduate College will email the *Authority Report Form for the Non-Thesis Exam* to your graduate liaison and your examining committee. Once released, the authority form is only valid for one semester. **You should not take the exam until you have verified with the committee that they have received the proper authority.**

**STEP 5: RETURN AUTHORITY FORM to GRADUATE COLLEGE**

The *Authority Report Form for the Non-Thesis Exam* is used to report the results of the non-thesis exam. The committee should grade the exam and report the results to the Graduate College within four (4) weeks after you complete the exam. Once the committee has reached a decision, the *Authority Report Form* must be returned to the Graduate College with a decision and original signatures within one (1) week of the decision. Results must be on file in the Graduate College no later than the deadline noted on the form.

A unanimous report from the committee is expected. If the committee does not reach a unanimous decision:

- If one member of the examining committee dissents, the dissent is recognized as a minority report.
- If the committee consists of more than three members and two dissent, the Graduate Dean will investigate and make a final decision.
- If more than three committee members vote “unsatisfactory,” then the exam will be judged unsatisfactory.

**DEADLINES for COMPLETION**

Review the *Academic Calendar* for information on deadlines for specific degree and course completion requirements. Please note that individual departments may require forms to be filed earlier than the dates shown. If you have questions about the following, please contact the Graduate College at 325-3811, or through e-mail at gradinfo@ou.edu.
PART II – OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PROOF OF GRADUATION, TRANSCRIPTS, AND DIPLOMAS

- The Office of Academic Records posts conferred degrees to the official transcript approximately six weeks after the close of each term.
- If you need proof of graduation before the degree has posted to your official transcript, you may submit a Request for Letter of Completion to the Graduate College. The Letter of Completion is an official University of Oklahoma document bearing the University seal and can be used as proof of graduation for purposes of potential employment, updating current personnel records, etc. Once the Graduate College has confirmed that you have met all degree requirements, the Office of Academic Records will mail the letter(s) you have requested, provided you have resolved all tuition and fee payments.
- The Office of Academic Records mails diplomas to graduates approximately 120 days after the close of the term.
- If you owe tuition or fees, you will be cleared for graduation, but you will not receive proof of graduation until all such payments have been resolved through the Office of the Bursar.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

- The OU Graduation Commencement Ceremony is held only once a year in the spring. All summer graduates, fall graduates and May graduation candidates are invited to participate in this ceremony.
- To purchase a cap and gown for the ceremonies, please contact the University Bookstore at (405) 325-3511 or attend one of the Graduation Gear-Up events held each fall and spring on the Norman campus and each spring on the Tulsa campus.
- For additional information about Commencement, College Convocations, receptions, and other celebratory events, please visit the Graduation Office.