

# Academics

## 2.1 Degree Requirements

### 2.1.1 Masters of Science (M.S.) Degree

The physics and astronomy Master of Science degrees are offered with either thesis or critical essay options. The degrees may be terminal or an intermediate step toward a Ph.D. In all cases, the final examination is oral, conducted by a committee of three members of the graduate faculty approved by the Dean of the Graduate College.

The program for the M.S. with thesis requires a thesis based on an original experimental or theoretical investigation by the candidate. The program for the M.S. with critical essay requires a critical essay on the literature of a particular area of physics.

#### **Master of Science in Physics**

1. For the M.S. with thesis or with critical essay, the candidate must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate work in courses numbered 4000 or above, of which at least 15 semester hours must be at the 5000 or above level, and with a minimum average GPA of 3.00. For the M.S. with thesis no more than 6 of the minimum 30 semester hours may be in PHYS:7992 and PHYS:7990), and for the M.S. with critical essay no more than 4 hours. Seminars do not count toward the 30 semester-hour requirement. Up to one-third of the coursework may be in graduate courses in related scientific fields other than physics (*e.g.*, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, and engineering).
2. Prepare a thesis or critical essay and pass the Final Examination.

#### **Master of Science in Astronomy**

1. Candidate must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate work in courses numbered 4000 or above with at least 15 semester hours at the 5000 or above level, and with a minimum average GPA of 3.00. The 30 semester hours must include at least 12 s.h. chosen from: ASTR:6870 (Radiative Processes in Astrophysics); ASTR:6770 (The Interstellar Medium); ASTR: 6790 (Stellar Astrophysics); ASTR:6880 (High Energy Astrophysics); ASTR:6782 (Extragalactic Astronomy); ASTR:7775 (Special Topics: Astronomical Observations); ASTR 7830 (Space and Astrophysical Plasmas); PHYS 7760 (General Relativity); or PHYS 7761 (Cosmology). For the M.S. with thesis no more than 6 of the minimum 30 semester hours may be in PHYS:7992 and ASTR:7991 and for the M.S. with critical essay no more than 4 hours. Seminars do not count for credit toward the 30 semester-hour requirement. Up to one-third of the coursework may be in graduate courses in related fields such as meteorology and electrical engineering.
2. Prepare a thesis or critical essay and pass the Final Examination.

### 2.1.2 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree

The doctoral degree in physics may be completed with an emphasis in physics, or through the Astronomy Track, with an emphasis in astronomy. The degree requirements are similar for the two tracks but the specific coursework requirements differ. Students who follow the Astronomy Track will receive a designation on their final transcript indicating that they have been awarded the Ph.D. in Physics (Astronomy).

The Doctor of Philosophy program in physics requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit, corresponding to coursework at the 3000-level and above.

Graduate students who wish to pursue a Ph.D. in physics must pass a qualifying examination in all principal areas of physics at the level of advanced undergraduate work. The Qualifying Exam is discussed in more detail in Section 2.4. The examination, which may be repeated only once, is given each year before the beginning of the spring semester. Students must pass the qualifying examination before the end of their fourth semester of graduate work at The University of Iowa. Note that students who report a score of 630 or above on the Advanced Physics GRE subject exam are exempt from this requirement.

All Ph.D. students must also pass a Comprehensive Examination (see Section 2.5); participate in advanced seminars; do original research in experimental physics, theoretical physics, or astrophysics; and prepare and defend a written dissertation based on this work.

The program of study for the Ph.D. with emphasis in physics or astronomy includes thorough course work in both classical and quantum physics for all students, whether their specialized research is to be in an experimental or a theoretical area. Students must take at least 24 s.h. of 200-level (5000-level or above) courses in the department, excluding PHYS:7992 Individual Critical Study, PHYS:7990 Research: Physics, ASTR:7991) Research: Astronomy, and seminars.

#### *Physics Track*

The following core graduate level courses are required for the Ph.D. with an emphasis in physics.\*

*PHYS:4761-4762	Mathematical Methods on Physics	6 s.h.
PHYS:5710	Classical Mechanics	3 s.h.
PHYS:5730	Statistical Mechanics I	3 s.h.
<a href="#">PHYS:5811-5812</a>	Classical Electrodynamics I-II	6 s.h.
<a href="#">PHYS:5741-5742</a>	Quantum Mechanics I-II	6 s.h.

\* Advanced mathematics, such as complex analysis and tensor analysis, is used freely in these courses. An introduction is given in Mathematical Methods of Physics I and II. A math placement exam given during orientation will be used to help determine if you should take these courses. Students who pass the exam can be exempted from this requirement.

### Astronomy Track

For the Ph.D. with an emphasis in Astronomy, students must complete at least four (12 s.h.) of the following core graduate level astronomy courses:

ASTR:6870	Radiative Processes in Astrophysics	3 s.h.
<a href="#">ASTR:6785</a>	The Interstellar Medium	3 s.h.
<a href="#">ASTR:6790</a>	Stellar Astrophysics	3 s.h.
<a href="#">ASTR:6880</a>	High Energy Astrophysics	3 s.h.
ASTR:6782	Extragalactic Astronomy	3 s.h.
PHYS:7760	General Relativity	3 s.h.
PHYS 7761	Cosmology	3 s.h.
ASTR 7775	Special Topics: Astronomical Observations	3 s.h.
ASTR:7830	Space and Astrophysical Plasma Physics	3 s.h.

In addition, each student must complete at least two (4 s.h.) of the following core graduate level physics courses:

PHYS:5710	Classical Mechanics	3 s.h.
<a href="#">PHYS:5730</a>	Statistical Mechanics I	3 s.h.
PHYS 5811-5812	Classical Electrodynamics I-II	6 s.h.
PHYS:5741-5742	Quantum Mechanics I-II	6 s.h.

### General Comments

Doctoral students in both the physics and astronomy tracks must pass each of the six 5000-level or above core courses with a minimum grade of B. If they do not they must retake the course to achieve the minimum grade. Exceptions to this rule may be approved by the EO Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Note that for both the physics and astronomy tracks, beyond the listed core courses, two additional advanced elective courses at the 5000 or above level are required for the Ph.D.

Because not all specialty courses are offered every year, students may wish to enroll in these courses in the first year to ensure adequate preparation for research in the subsequent year.

After a student has chosen a research specialty, he or she must submit a formal thesis proposal and defend the proposal in an oral comprehensive exam (Section 2.5). The appropriate thesis advisor then becomes the candidate's general advisor and the chair of the comprehensive and final examination committee. The comprehensive exam is typically taken within one or two years after beginning research, and must be taken at least one semester prior to the final thesis defense.

Ph.D. candidates are recommended for the degree when they have written and defended their dissertation and, with the approval of their research advisor, have submitted the results for formal publication in a widely distributed, refereed scientific journal.

### 2.1.3 Worksheets

**M.S. Astronomy Worksheet**  
(3.00 minimum GPA required)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Required 30 semester hours of 4000 level or above, with at least 15 at the 5000 or above level, and must include at least 12 s.h. chosen from:

- ASTR:6870) Radiative Processes in Astrophysics \_\_\_\_\_
- ASTR:6785 The Interstellar Medium \_\_\_\_\_
- ASTR:6790 Stellar Astrophysics \_\_\_\_\_
- ASTR:6880 High Energy Astrophysics \_\_\_\_\_
- ASTR:6782 Extragalactic Astronomy \_\_\_\_\_
- ASTR 7775 Special Topics: Astronomical Observations \_\_\_\_\_
- ASTR 7830 Space and Astrophysical Plasmas \_\_\_\_\_
- PHYS 7760 General Relativity \_\_\_\_\_
- PHYS 7761 Cosmology \_\_\_\_\_

Up to one-third of the coursework may be in graduate courses in related fields such as meteorology and electrical engineering, and such courses are encouraged.

<p><b>4000-5000 Level</b></p> <p>Up to 15 semester hours (with an average grade of 3.00 or better)</p>	<p><b>5000+ Level</b></p> <p>Up to 15 semester hours (with an average grade of 3.00 or better)</p>	<p><b>Individual Critical Study/Research PHYS:7992 &amp; ASTR:7991</b> (6 sh max with thesis &amp; 4 sh max with critical essay)</p>
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<u>Course #</u>	<u>credits</u>

Total to date \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Course #</u>	<u>credits</u>

Total to date \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Course #</u>	<u>credits</u>

Total to date \_\_\_\_\_

Identify transfer credits in above categories with a T.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Residency met? (24 of 30 here)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 10-yr old credits?

4000-5000 level \_\_\_\_\_  
 5000+ level \_\_\_\_\_  
 Individual Critical Study/Research \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credits to date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total credits required **30**  
 Hours needed \_\_\_\_\_

**M.S. Physics Worksheet**  
 (3.00 minimum GPA required)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Required 30 semester hours of 4000 level or above, with at least 15 at the 5000 level.

Up to one-third of the coursework may be in related scientific fields other than physics and mathematics – for example, chemistry, astronomy, geology, or engineering.

**4000-5000 Level**  
 Up to 15 semester hours  
 (with an average grade or 3.00  
 or better)

**5000+ Level**  
 Up to 15 semester hours  
 (with an average grade or 3.00  
 or better)

**Individual Critical  
 Study/Research**  
**PHYS:7992 &**  
**PHYS:7990**  
 (6 sh max with thesis & 4 sh  
 max with critical essay)

<u>Course #</u>	<u>credits</u>

Total to date \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Course #</u>	<u>credits</u>

Total to date \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Course #</u>	<u>credits</u>

Total to date \_\_\_\_\_

4000-5000 level \_\_\_\_\_

5000 level \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Critical Study/Research \_\_\_\_\_

Credits to date \_\_\_\_\_

Total credits required **30**

Hours needed \_\_\_\_\_

Identify transfer credits in above categories with a T.

Residence requirement met:  yes;  no

\_\_\_\_\_ 10-yr old credits?



## 2.2 Expectation for Enrollment as Full-Time Student\*

The rules that define full-time graduate student enrollment status can be found in the University General Catalog and/or the Graduate College Manual. Here we briefly summarize those rules. If you have questions about the rules or how they may apply in your case, see your advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies.

Full-time graduate student status normally requires enrollment in a minimum of 9 s.h. at the 3000 level or above at UI during the fall and spring semesters of each academic year. Exceptions to the 9 s.h. rule are noted below. Course registration is not required during the summer provided the student intends to register for full-time status during the ensuing fall semester. Also please note that the specific enrollment requirements for full-time status are somewhat more stringent for international graduate students because of additional immigration rules for international students.

Full time graduate students in the Ph.D. program are normally expected to register for a minimum of 9 s.h. of graduate level work each semester until the minimum required 24 s.h. of coursework at the 5000 or above level has been completed. The required courses are delineated in Section 2.1.2 for both the Physics and Astronomy Tracks. Once the minimum required 24 s.h. of coursework has been completed, students may petition to take fewer than 9 s.h per semester by filling out a “short hours form” available through the Registrar’s Office. Such a petition may be justified based on one or more of the following conditions, and must be approved by the Department.

Justification for registering for fewer than 9 s.h.:

The student is engaged in:

- Research in fulfillment of a degree requirement
- Writing a thesis or dissertation
- Preparing a prospectus
- Gaining facility in a foreign language or other tools
- Preparing for a comprehensive/final examination
- Internships
- Research/Teaching Assistantship (RA/TA)

International students requesting to register for fewer than 9 s.h must also fill out an additional form available through OISS:

<http://international.uiowa.edu/ui-departments/enrollment-rules>

This form requires justification based on at least one of the following conditions:  
That the student has:

- Graduate Assistantship and registered in at least 6 hours
- Completed/is currently completing all required coursework and is preparing for a Comprehensive Examination
- Completed/is currently completing all required coursework and is making normal progress on Thesis/Dissertation .

When considering whether to petition for a reduction in the required 9 s.h. enrollment rule it is important to remember that the total hours and Graduate College residency requirements must also be met. These require 72 semester hours total of graduate level work, and satisfaction of the following UI Graduate college residency requirement:

*Residency Requirement for the Doctoral Degree:*

Student registration should reflect accurately the amount and kind of work undertaken in the Graduate College. The Ph.D., D.M.A., and DNP are granted primarily on the basis of achievement, and engagement with one's discipline is an important part of achieving quality in a dissertation. The purpose of the registration requirement is to promote a high level of intellectual and scholarly activity at The University of Iowa. These requirements foster intensive, concentrated engagement with the faculty members and graduate students in a student's program.

All doctoral programs will contain a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate work. Of those 72 semester hours, at least 39 must be earned while registered in The University of Iowa Graduate College, and after formal program admission. For example, the academic registration requirement cannot be fulfilled by coursework completed under the non-degree or non-departmental student classification or with transfer credit.

A student must be registered in the semester in which (s)he earns her/his degree

*\* The specific rules regarding full-time enrollment status and residency are dictated by the UI Graduate College and/or Immigration Law and are subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all the legal requirements for enrollment status and residency are met. If you have any questions in this regard you are advised to contact the Graduate College or the International Student Services Office.*



## 2.3 Progress to the Degree

Graduate students are expected, on a continuing basis, to make reasonable progress toward their degree goal. Continued financial support, though a graduate assistantship (TA or RA) or fellowship, is contingent on such progress. Because individual circumstances vary, it can be difficult to specify in every case what constitutes adequate progress toward the degree. For example, some of the coursework requirements may be delayed for students who begin significant research activities in the first two years. In addition, it is not uncommon for students to change research advisors, which can delay reaching various milestones. The discussion here is *not* intended to dissuade students from starting research early, or from changing research advisors or topics if they feel that would be in their best interests. Every spring you must complete the online annual progress report describing your research progress including any significant results or difficulties that you have encountered (see forms on departmental webpage. However, a general schedule and set of milestones is suggested below for both M.S. and Ph.D. students:

Progress to the M.S. Degree (see M.S. requirements in Section 2.1.1):

1. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester at UI:
  - \* Complete 18 s.h. of graduate level coursework, including 9 s.h. at the 5000 or above level.
  - \* Identify a faculty advisor and topic area for a research thesis or critical essay.
2. By the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester at UI:
  - \* Complete 27 s.h. of graduate level coursework including at least 12 s.h at the 5000 or above level
  - \* Make substantial progress in research or review work for your thesis or critical essay.
  - \* In consultation with your advisor select your examination committee.
3. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester at UI:
  - \* Complete all coursework requirements
  - \* Complete and defend your M.S. thesis or Critical Essay.

Progress to the Ph.D. Degree (see Ph.D. requirements in Section 2.1.2):

1. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester at UI:
  - \* Complete 18 s.h. of graduate level credit including at least 9 s.h. of coursework at the 5000 or above level.
  - \* For international students pass the Speak/Lec Test.<sup>+</sup>
2. By the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester at UI:
  - \* Pass the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination
  - \* Complete 27 s.h. of graduate level credit including at least 12 s.h. of the required 5000 or above level coursework
3. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester at UI:
  - \* Complete the required 24 s.h. of graduate level coursework at the 5000 or above level.
  - \* Identify a faculty research advisor.
4. By the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester at UI, and in consultation with your research advisor:
  - \* Identify a research topic or question
  - \* Begin preparing your Comprehensive Exam research proposal
  - \* Select your Comprehensive Exam/ Dissertation committee.
5. By the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> semester at UI:
  - \* Complete the Comprehensive Examination

- \* Complete the Ph.D. residency requirement.
- 6. Subsequent to the passing the Comprehensive Exam:
  - \* Complete the online annual progress report describing your research progress including any significant results or difficulties that you have encountered (see forms on departmental webpage).
  - \* Have annual post comps review meetings to discuss your progress with your Dissertation committee, scheduled by you and your advisor.

+ *Teaching assistants whose first language is not English are expected by the end of your first year as a teaching assistant to have attained a B certification from the English as a Second Language (ESL) office. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will not approve any appointments for a second year teaching assistants who have not met this criterion.*

## 2.4 Qualifying Exam

Graduate students who wish to pursue a Ph.D. in physics must pass the Qualifying Examination, which covers the principal areas of physics at the level of advanced undergraduate work. Graduate students are required to sit for the Ph.D. Qualifier Exam in January, always the week before the spring semester begins, during their first year of graduate study at UI. Students will be given two chances to pass the Qualifier.

The exam consists of 12 problems (6 problems each day) and will cover the following subjects at the advanced undergraduate level:

Classical Mechanics  
Electricity and Magnetism  
Statistical Physics  
Quantum Mechanics

You should have completed the following advanced undergraduate courses (or their equivalents) in preparation for the exam: PHYS:3710, 3730, 3741, 3742, 3811, 3812.

Sample exams from prior years are available from Jeanne Mullen in the General Office.

***Students who have reported a Physics GRE subject test score of 630 or greater are exempt from this requirement.***

Students must pass the Qualifying Examination (or submit verification that the requirement has been met by GRE score) before the end of their fourth semester of graduate work at The University of Iowa.

## **2.5 Comprehensive Exam Guidelines**

### **2.5.1 Objective of the Comprehensive Examination**

The intent of the Comprehensive Exam is to solidify the program of research proposed for the doctoral thesis and to obtain approval for this course of research from the Ph.D. thesis committee. The Comprehensive Exam involves the formal presentation of the proposed thesis research plan, including a review of the scientific background and relevant literature, and a summary of the preliminary work completed (if any). The exam itself is comprised of a written thesis proposal and an oral defense of that proposal before the Ph.D. thesis committee.

In the Comprehensive Exam the student is expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of the relevant scientific background to the project, present a clear statement of the research questions to be addressed, and outline a research plan for addressing those questions. It is important to note, however, that it is not necessary for the student to guarantee that all aspects of the proposal will work as expected, because that would require the research to be essentially done. It is also not necessary for the final dissertation to be on the same topic that they defend at the Comprehensive Exam, should the research take a different, but justifiable, direction.

### **2.5.2 Scheduling the Comprehensive Examination**

- The Comprehensive Exam must be passed at least one semester prior to the final thesis defense. Please fill out the “Notification to take Comprehensive Exam” form and give to Jeanne Mullen one month before your exam.
- It is recommended that the Comprehensive Exam be taken within two years after beginning a research program.
- A copy of the written proposal should be given to each committee member at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral examination.

### **2.5.3 Selection of the Ph.D. Thesis Committee**

The Comprehensive Exam Committee generally also serves as the Ph.D. Thesis Committee. In each the case the makeup of the Committee will be determined by the advisor, in consultation with the student. This committee must be approved by the Departmental Executive Officer. The Ph.D. Thesis Committee will consist of five members as follows:

- the student’s advisor, who will serve as chair of the committee;
- three additional members from the Department of Physics and Astronomy;
- one member from outside the Department. The outside member must hold a Ph.D. and have a tenure track faculty position or equivalent position in a research institution or industry. Please send Jeanne Mullen an electronic copy of your outside member’s CV if they are from outside the University of Iowa.

Once the Committee has been approved by the DEO and **at least** two weeks prior to the exam, the following information must be provided to Jeanne Mullen:

- names and titles of committee members;
- date, time and location of exam
- completed Doctoral Plan of Study (Jeanne Mullen will submit this form).

#### **2.5.4 Format of the Written Thesis Proposal**

The Comprehensive Examination is an evaluation of the prospective thesis topic and the student's mastery of subjects in the research area of the proposed thesis. The proposal, which should be prepared in close consultation with the student's advisor, must demonstrate significant and thoughtful consideration of the thesis problem and clear evidence that the student is prepared to carry out the research in the proposed area.

The format and structure of the Comprehensive Exam is intended to be flexible. However, the proposal itself should consist of the following sections:

- 1) *Abstract*: A brief summary of the proposed research program.
- 2) *Scientific Background*: The proposed research should be placed in the appropriate scientific context, with a concise presentation of the central scientific issues and a review of the relevant scientific literature. This section should include a clear statement of why the proposed research problem is important.
- 3) *Methodology*: An outline of the methodology to be used.
- 4) *Previous Work*: An overview of the results of preliminary research completed in preparation for the project.
- 5) *Proposed Work*: A description of the proposed work to be completed for the project.

The length of the written proposal should be approximately 15 pages, not including the reference list, although deviations from this standard are allowed at the discretion of the student's advisor.

Depending on timing of the Comprehensive Exam, Sections (4) and (5) may carry different weights: a student at an early stage may have few (or even no) preliminary results but present a clearly defined work plan, while a student at a later stage may have already completed a substantial fraction of the final dissertation work.

#### **2.5.5 Format of the Oral Defense**

The oral defense of the thesis proposal before the Ph.D. Thesis Committee is a key element of the Comprehensive Examination. The student should prepare an approximately 45 minute presentation of his/her thesis proposal, allowing ample time for questions from members of the committee. The presentation should demonstrate the student's mastery of the subject matter of the research area, identify the research problem to be tackled and address the importance of the research in the context of the discipline, and lay out the plan of the proposed research, including

a review of the preliminary research completed. The oral defense represents an opportunity for the committee to evaluate the scope of the proposed research as well as the suitability of the research as the basis for awarding the Ph.D. degree.

## **2.6 Progress toward a degree after the comprehensive exam**

In order to assure that students make timely progress toward their degree, the student's advisory committee has responsibility for oversight of the student's progress toward the degree. Specifically,

- The student should prepare an annual written report to be distributed to the internal members (Physics and Astronomy) of his/her thesis committee. This is typically a one page summary of the research progress including any significant results or problems that may have been encountered in the project
- The annual progress report should be approved by the thesis committee.

## **2.7 Review of Requirements for the PhD degree**

Complete the departmental course requirements/find an advisor/do research/write thesis/complete 72 hours of credit and handle all of the paperwork to satisfy these requirements. The [UI Catalog](#) has all of these requirements listed. Please be sure that Jeanne Mullen has copies of everything you do for this.

### **Comprehensive Exam**

Prepare for comprehensive exam, ideally by the end of the third year, in consultation with your research advisor. Note, the comprehensive exam cannot be taken in the same semester as the thesis defense, and you must be registered during the semester you do the comprehensive exam. Note that if you do your comps in the summer, you must be enrolled for the summer session.

Complete a plan of study: <http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/DPos.pdf> and submit it with a copy of your student record, current registration and Request for Doctoral Comprehensive Examination form to Jeanne Mullen.

<http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/CompExam.pdf>

After passing the comprehensive exam, the exam report must be filed (by Jeanne Mullen). Note that students must have a continuous registration after completing the comprehensive exam (with summers excepted, unless you wish to graduate in the summer).

### **Prepare PhD Thesis and Thesis Defense**

You and your advisor will decide when to plan for the final thesis defense. It is your responsibility to know the Graduate College deadlines and when the thesis deposit date is. (see below for deadlines) It must follow various formatting rules, see <http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/theses-and-dissertations/graduate-college-thesis-manual>

Note that you must be a registered student in the semester in which you graduate. In fact, students must have continuous registration after completing the comprehensive exam (summers excepted, unless you wish to graduate in the summer).

Generally, the completed PhD thesis is sent to committee members **at least** two weeks in advance of the thesis defense date. Once you have your defense date and time set, submit the “Notification of Intent to Defend” form to Jeanne Mullen. She will then submit the “Request for Final Examination” form to the Graduate College.

See Graduate College deadlines for when this final exam report is due. This is your responsibility!

Sometimes the final exam is passed, but the thesis needs revisions before the thesis is signed. To graduate in a given semester, the changes need to be made before the final deadline. Summer degrees are awarded, but no summer graduation ceremonies are held. If you make your final thesis deposit after the final deposit deadline, but before the first day of classes in the new semester, you may register “Early Clearance Registration” through the Graduate College which has minimal fees.

### **Graduate College Deadlines**

<http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/deadlines> for graduation applications, final exam requests, final exam report and thesis deposit.

*Fees* <http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/theses-and-dissertations/graduation-thesis-related-fees>

## **2.8 Academic Dismissal of Graduate Students**

It is expected that graduate students will conform to the requirements set forth in the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College and follow, as closely as possible, the program design as outlined in this Handbook. See <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/manual-part-1-the-academic-program> with attention to Section IV.

There are several instances where dismissal of graduate students from the department's program of study is inferred. To make these as explicit as possible, the student's attention is called to the following situations:

- A. **Doctoral Students.** A doctoral student on regular status shall be placed on academic probation if, after completing 9 semester hours of graded (A, B, C, D, F) graduate work at The University of Iowa, the student's UI Cumulative GPA falls below 3.00. A student regains good academic standing when his or her UI Cumulative GPA returns to 3.00. If, after completing 9 more semester hours of graded (A, B, C, D, F) graduate work at this University, the student's UI Cumulative GPA remains below 3.00, the student will be dropped from the degree program and denied permission to re-register within any Graduate College doctoral degree program. The student may apply for and be accepted into a non-doctoral degree or certificate program.
- B. Doctoral students must also pass a qualifying examination in all principal areas of physics at the level of advanced undergraduate work. The Qualifying Exam is discussed in more detail in Section 2.4. The examination, which may be repeated only once, is given each year before the beginning of the spring semester. Students must pass the qualifying examination before the end of their fourth semester of graduate work at The University of Iowa. Note that students who report a score of 630 or above on the Advanced Physics GRE subject exam in this same time frame are exempt from this requirement.
- C. **• Non-doctoral Students.** A non-doctoral departmental (master's, professional improvement, certificate) student, except one on conditional status, shall be placed on academic probation if, after completing 9 semester hours of graded (A, B, C, D, F) graduate work at The University of Iowa, the student's [UI Cumulative GPA](#) falls below 2.75. A student regains good academic standing when his or her UI Cumulative GPA returns to 2.75, or greater. If, after completing 9 more semester hours of graded (A, B, C, D, F) graduate work at the University, the student's UI Cumulative GPA remains below 2.75, the student will be denied permission to re-register within any Graduate College degree program.\*

Non-doctoral, non-departmental (non-degree, extension, workshop) students shall be evaluated for academic probation and dismissal based on the same semester-hour sequence as stated above, at a minimum UI Cumulative GPA of 2.50.

\* This requirement shall apply to students entering non-doctoral departmental programs beginning with the Fall 2001 Semester. A minimum UI Cumulative GPA of 2.50 is required of non-doctoral departmental students admitted prior to that session.

- D. **Restriction on Students on Probation.** A student on probation shall not be permitted to take comprehensive or final examinations leading to any degree or certificate, nor may the student receive any graduate degree or certificate.
- E. **Departmental Regulations and Dissemination of Information.** In addition to the above University-wide requirements, departments may establish further requirements which then determine the individual student's standing with regard to probation and dismissal. To this end, each department or program shall compile a written list of standards and procedures for work in that area. These documents shall be on file in each departmental office and the office

of the Graduate College dean. Copies are to be available for students in the departmental office, and departments shall make all reasonable efforts to inform students. Subsequent changes in standards or procedures shall be communicated by the department to each student and the Graduate College dean. Whenever departments revise standards for a given program, the new regulations will not apply retroactively to the disadvantage of those already in the program. In addition to notifying students that they are subject to the rules of the Graduate College as set forth in the Manual of Rules and Regulations, any standards established by the department more stringent than the general Graduate College requirements shall be stated. Information shall be provided outlining required courses applicable to the various departmental programs of study, examination procedures and other formal evaluations, departmental policies with regard to awarding and renewing assistantships, time limits on programs of study, departmental registration policies, departmental grade-point requirements, requirements for changing from one degree program to another within the department, especially from the master's to the doctor's degrees, departmental probation and dismissal policies and procedures (see [E](#) following), and other matters as are appropriate. The nature of the departmental advisory system shall be explained to incoming students.

- F. **Academic Progress, Departmental Probation, and Dismissal Procedures.** If a student is failing to meet departmental standards, the department shall warn the student of this fact in writing. The notification shall specify in what way(s) the student is failing to meet the standards. The student shall be provided a reasonable amount of time to meet the standards prior to departmental dismissal. If conditions such as conditional admission or probation are imposed, the department shall give at the time of its imposition written explanation of this status and its time limits.

A student who will not be permitted to re-register for failure to meet standards shall be notified of this fact in writing with reasons for the action provided. Such dismissal may follow failure to meet conditions of admission, conditions of probation, pre-announced departmental grade-point requirements or other standards, or failure of a regularly scheduled examination or formal evaluation. If a student judges the dismissal decision improper, the student has a right to review. Each department shall establish procedures for handling such reviews. The procedures are to be approved by the Graduate College dean and shall afford a fair and expeditious review. A description of these procedures shall be included in the departmental regulations described above. (See [Section IV. D.](#) at <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/manual-part-1-the-academic-program> )

- G. **Plagiarism by Graduate Students.** The Online Oxford English Dictionary defines "plagiarize" as follows, "to take and use as one's own (the thoughts, writings, or inventions of another person); to copy (literary work or ideas) improperly or without acknowledgement; (occas.) to pass off as one's own the thoughts or work of (another)." In practice, the exact definition of "plagiarize" or "plagiarism" is dependent upon the unique attributes of the creative work of a discipline. Thus, it is understood that different academic disciplines and cultures may have different interpretations as to the actual actions which constitute plagiarism. The Graduate College will operate in the following manner when a program or department discovers an act or acts of plagiarism on the part of a graduate student.



1. If the faculty members of a program or department determine that the transgression is not major, or else feel that there is a misunderstanding of the acts which constitute plagiarism, the program or department may wish to work with the student so as to prevent future occurrences of plagiarism on the part of that student. Written notification of the offense and the remediation for the offense must be sent to the Graduate College for inclusion in the student's file.
2. If the faculty members of a program or department discover an act (or acts) of plagiarism that is (are) sufficiently egregious that expulsion from the program is warranted, the student will be terminated from his or her graduate program for reasons of plagiarism. In this case, the student will be simultaneously terminated from the Graduate College of The University of Iowa. The program or department must notify the student of his or her termination in writing. All relevant facts, as well as the process for appealing the decision, must be contained in the termination letter. The Graduate College must receive a copy of the termination letter.

The appeal process for students accused of academic misconduct is specified in The University of Iowa document, "Policies and Regulations Affecting Students, C. Academic Misconduct," which states:

"Questions of academic dishonesty arising within the colleges of Medicine, Law, Pharmacy, and Dentistry, and the Graduate College are treated on an individual basis.

In the Graduate College, the questions [of academic dishonesty] are handled at the departmental level. If the departmental decision is appealed, the dean may appoint an appeals committee of faculty and students from a slate of nominees prepared by the Graduate Council and the Graduate Student Senate to recommend an appropriate course of action."

The appeal process must be initiated by the student. If the student wishes to appeal the department's or program's action, that appeal must be lodged with the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate College within 30 days of program or departmental dismissal.

- H. **Graduate College Review of Departmental Dismissal.** Questions involving judgment of performance will not be reviewed beyond the departmental level. If, however, the student feels there has been unfairness or some procedural irregularity concerning dismissal, the student may pursue a grievance according to the Academic Grievance Procedure (AGP) established by the Graduate College. The AGP is available in the Graduate College. The student should consult with the Graduate College prior to initiating an academic grievance.