TO: The Academic Senate
FROM: The Committee on Instruction and Curriculum (CIC)
SUBJECT: 15-16 CIC 30: Master’s Requirements for Semester Calendar
PURPOSE: Action by the Senate

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
At CIC’s February 15, 2016 meeting the Committee considered a proposal from its Graduate Programs Subcommittee to revise the Master’s Degree Requirements section of the Catalog for semester conversion. In addition to the direct units changes necessary for semesters, the Subcommittee also made substantive changes based on proposed changes to Title V, cleaned up inconsistencies in the current catalog, and made changes that were recommended by the Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC). These include:

1. Changing the 50% requirement to 50% in ‘stand-alone’ graduate classes. Title V currently requires that “not less than on-half of the units requirement for the degree shall be in courses organized for graduate study.” The proposed semester master’s requirements define “courses organized primarily for graduate students” as stand-alone graduate courses, which is consistent with proposed changes to Title V. For a 30-unit graduate program, this equals 15 units, 6 of which may be in the capstone experience.

2. Adding an 68-unit limit of independent study units. There has never been a limit to the number of independent study units for master’s programs, and both the GAC and the CIC Graduate Programs Subcommittee feels such limit is appropriate. 68 units is 2027% of a 30-unit master’s program, so the Subcommittee thought this was a reasonable limit.

3. Revised the CR/NC requirements. The current catalog has master’s requirements for CR/NC grades in two sections of the catalog, and these two sections are somewhat inconsistent. The statement regarding CR/NC in the Grading section of the current catalog states: “A student may use courses taken on a “CR/NC” basis to meet the degree requirements only if the courses are offered exclusively on that basis. Typically, these courses are restricted to fieldwork and internships and a “CR” grade indicates that the student’s work is at least of “B-” quality”. The proposed requirements for semesters combine these sections into one statement, removing this inconsistency.
As always, all of these requirements may be waived via the petition process. Programs may also establish programs-specific requirements that are stricter than the university requirements.

CIC made additional editorial changes and unanimously recommended that the Senate adopt the requirements statement below as policy, effective upon transition to semesters.

PROPOSED POLICY:

Master's Degree Requirements

A student wishing to earn a master’s degree must complete the five requirements listed below:

1. Fulfill the University Writing Skills Requirement;
2. Be Advanced to Candidacy;
3. Complete at least 45 quarter 30 semester units applicable to your degree (45-52 in the Interdisciplinary Studies Major, 48 in Public Administration, 52-54 in Multimedia, 52-64 in the MBA, 72 in Counseling or Social Work) (Please see specific program requirements in this catalog for the total number of units required for each master’s degree program).
   o All units must be earned within the five calendar years immediately preceding the receipt of your degree. (Outdated units may be accepted for one additional year with the approval of your department and the Senior, Academic Programs and Graduate Studies. If not completed in the sixth year, currency in the subject matter of the outdated courses must be demonstrated. Courses older than seven years are only applied to the degree in exceptional circumstances.)
   o A minimum of seventy (70) percent of the total units required by the degree program must be completed in residence while enrolled as an admitted graduate student at Cal State East Bay. For example, for a 30-unit master’s program, 21 units in residence are required. (Note: The number of transferable units for each degree program will be rounded to the nearest whole number of units.) Units taken while at other schools, while an undergraduate with permission to take graduate courses, while pursuing an additional baccalaureate degree in “Unclassified Post-Baccalaureate” status, while enrolled in another graduate degree program, or while enrolled in Continuing Education courses-including Open University courses-do not count as resident units. Courses offered in special session are considered resident units. Please note that individual graduate programs may require more than 70 percent of the required degree units in residence, so check your particular program’s section of this catalog for these requirements.
   o At least 50% of the units in your program must be in stand-alone 6000-level courses. Up to 50% of the units may be in upper-division undergraduate courses and/or dual-listed undergraduate/graduate courses.
   o No lower division units can be counted.
   o No more than 9 6 units of university thesis, or 5 units of departmental thesis, or project work units can be counted.
No more than 68 units of independent study can be counted.

No more than 15 units may be in CR/NC courses (16 in Public Administration, 24 in Counseling, and 24 in Social Work). No units counted towards the total graduate program units may be taken on a “CR/NC” basis unless they are for courses that are offered exclusively on that basis (primarily restricted to fieldwork and internship courses). This does not apply to courses taken to satisfy foundation or proficiency requirements or the University Writing Skills Requirement.

4. Complete a program of study approved by your department, which must include a thesis, project, or comprehensive examination; and

5. Earn a 3.0 grade point average in all units counted towards your degree, with a minimum course grade of “C” in every course. Any course that counts toward your degree requirements with a grade of “C-” or below will have to be repeated. Please note that individual graduate programs may require a higher minimum grade, so students should check your program’s section of this catalog for these requirements.

Please note that individual master’s program requirements may be more stringent than the requirements outlined above. Please check your program’s section of this catalog for specific program requirements.

Candidacy

“Candidacy” is a status which recognizes completion of substantial progress towards your degree. A student becomes eligible for Advancement to Candidacy when they:

1. have become a “Classified Graduate” student in good standing;
2. have completed at least 152 quarter units of master’s degree coursework with a minimum 3.0 GPA;
3. have designed a formal program of study approved by your graduate advisor;
4. have fulfilled the University Writing Skills Requirement;
5. have completed other department prerequisites for advancement; and
6. are recommended for Advancement to Candidacy by their academic advisor (subject to approval by the department’s graduate coordinator).

Capstone Experiences

The capstone experience of the graduate program will be the successful completion of a thesis, project, or comprehensive examination. The quality of the student’s work, including quality of expression, is the major consideration in judging the success of this degree component.

Thesis

A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant issue. In the thesis, the student is expected to identify the issue, state the major assumptions, explain the significance of the project, detail sources for and methods of obtaining data, provide analysis of the data, and offer conclusions. The thesis should demonstrate original critical and independent thinking,
appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. If the research involves human subjects, the protocols must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (see “Research with Human Subjects” in the Appendix).

Cal State East Bay offers two kinds of master’s degree theses, University Thesis (numbered 6910) and Departmental Thesis (numbered 699). Students required, or electing, to write a thesis must register for a minimum of one unit of either 691 or 699 in order to receive credit toward completion of this capstone experience. Students should check with the department for information on the number of units for which they must enroll.

Most The following criteria are the same for both the Departmental Thesis and the University Thesis:

- The candidate must be a graduate student (i.e., admitted to a master’s degree program) to enroll in a thesis course; the academic department may add additional requirements.
- The student’s thesis work will be supervised by a departmental committee which must include at least one Cal State East Bay faculty member who is a member of the major department. Please see the Thesis Committee Policy for additional thesis committee requirements.
- The student may not receive credit for more units of thesis work than allowed by the degree program.
- Each quarter the student will receive a grade of “RP” (Report in Progress) for units earned in 691 or 699 until they have completed their thesis; the student will then be given a final grade for the entire course. No “RP” units will be counted towards the degree or in calculating their GPA. If the thesis is not approved within five years of your initial enrollment in a thesis course, the “RP” grade(s) will be changed to “F” or “NC” (depending on the grading pattern of the course).
- Normally a degree candidate will be required to present an oral defense of their thesis.
- A Master’s degree candidate may not earn more than 96 units for a University Thesis, while the maximum for Departmental Thesis is 5 units. Several departments have lower unit requirements, so the student should check the program description in this catalog.

There are also a few significant differences between the two kinds of theses.

University Thesis: The format of a University Thesis is established by the Associate Vice President, Academic Programs and Graduate Studies. Since these works are expected to serve as resources for future research, the format is formal. An electronic copy is placed in the Institutional Repository. A Departmental Thesis, on the other hand, is usually not as formal. The Departmental Thesis standards and format are determined by the department, and the thesis is retained by the department.

For information on the steps to follow (the approval process, required format for the structural elements of the thesis, and deadlines) when writing a University Thesis, consult the University Thesis Writing Guide available online at www.csueastbay.edu/thesiswritingguide. If a student has questions concerning the selection of a topic, and/or the procedure to establish a thesis committee and research protocols, they should contact their department advisor or graduate
coordinator. If the student has additional questions concerning the formatting and binding of their University Thesis after having read the University Thesis Writing Guide, it is recommended they contact the University Thesis Editor at thesis.editor@csueastbay.edu.

**Departmental Thesis:** For information about a Departmental Thesis (the department’s thesis guidelines, including format, acceptable thesis topics, and procedures to establish a thesis committee) contact the department advisor or graduate coordinator.

**Project**
A project is a significant piece of non-written work undertaking in either a fine or applied art or a professional field. Projects should provide evidence of originality, independent thinking, and appropriate form and organization. Students are required to describe their project in a written abstract that addresses the project’s significance, objectives, methodology, and conclusions. In some cases, the student may be required to present an oral defense.

Specific criteria for a Project (numbered 6899 693) are the same as those for a Departmental Thesis with a few exceptions.

- An “RP” grade in a project course will become an “F” (no “NC” option) after one year if your project is not completed.
- While the project need not be considered a research resource, it should be of a caliber to constitute a valid terminal activity in a master’s degree program and will be permitted only when a thesis is not appropriate.

If a Master’s degree student changes from a program requiring a thesis to one requiring a project (or vice versa), they may count a combined maximum of 69 units for 691, 693 and 699 6909, 6910, and 6899 towards the degree.

**Comprehensive Examination**
A comprehensive examination is intended to assess the student’s mastery of relevant subject matter, their ability to analyze and integrate the knowledge of their field, their skill in critical and independent thinking, and their use of appropriate organization and accurate documentation. A record of the student’s examination (questions and responses) will be retained by their department. Some departments grant unit credit for exam preparation while others do not.