

UC DAVIS GRADUATE COUNCIL POLICY

GC2012-02 (Rev 01)

Policy on UC Davis – Master’s Degree Capstone Requirement

Approved – June 1, 2012

Amended – May 25, 2018

At the University of California, Master’s degree programs include a “capstone” requirement (as embodied in the dissertation for doctoral degrees), which is essential for maintaining the research-oriented quality of a University of California graduate degree, integrating the intellectual substance of a program, and quality control. The norm for a capstone requirement is a thesis or a comprehensive examination, completed at or near the end of the coursework for the Master’s degree. Master’s degrees are offered as either “Plan I” (capstone is a thesis/project) or “Plan II” (capstone is a comprehensive final examination).

For the chosen option, the Program must describe how the success or failure of the student in meeting the capstone requirement will be evaluated by a committee appointed according to the **Policy on Service on Advanced Degree Committees GC1998-01**. In addition the Program should provide information concerning how the committee that will evaluate the student’s capstone requirement is assembled.

The UC Davis Graduate Council gives the following examples of options for a Master’s Plan II degree.

- a. Comprehensive written exam at the end of spring quarter year 1, with an oral exam at end of year 2 for all students to ensure comprehensive capstone testing.
- b. Comprehensive written exam at the end of spring quarter year 1, with a capstone written report at the end of year 2 on an appropriately comprehensive topic.
- c. Comprehensive written exam in winter quarter of year 2, with a 2nd chance for those students who fail being an oral exam in spring quarter of year 2.
- d. Comprehensive written exam at the end of spring quarter year 2, with no option to retake the exam if a student fails.

Alternative procedures (such as a capstone written report on an appropriate topic that functions as a comprehensive exam) can be proposed by a graduate program and they will be reviewed and if deemed appropriate will be approved by Graduate Council. However, it is of paramount importance that any alternative procedure proposed satisfy (1) the regulations as encoded in the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs handbook (Appendix I, page 36, of <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/committees/ccga/ccga-handbook-august-2016.pdf>), (2) Davis Division Regulation 500 for General Requirements for Master’s Degrees (https://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/bylaws_and_regulations/regulations.cfm#500-), and (3) this policy.