

# THE DEGREE PROGRAM PLAN OF STUDY

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Upon matriculation the student, in conjunction with their advisor or academic coach, will identify his/her specific objectives. The advisor will aid the student in constructing a *Plan of Study*, which should be formulated during the first semester in residence for a master's degree or within the first year for the doctoral degree. The advisor and the student together will draw up a Plan of Study to be endorsed by the program director, major advisor or research advisory committee. The Plan of Study for doctoral students will be forwarded to the Graduate Dean. The Plan of Study for master's students should be maintained in the departmental files. The Plan of Study should list the following:

1. Courses required for removal of undergraduate deficiencies;
2. Courses taken prior to submitting the Plan of Study that apply to the minimum credit requirement;
3. Courses required by the degree program;
4. Elective courses (or course options) that may be taken in application to the minimum credit requirement;
5. Courses taken outside the degree program.

The Plan of Study serves as a record for the Graduate School, the program director, the advisor or academic coach, and the degree candidate for monitoring progress in the degree program. The Plan of Study may be revised only upon approval of the advisor, and/or research advisory committee, and the graduate program director. Master's degree programs must be completed within six years; the Ed.D. and D.B.A. programs must be completed within seven years; Ph.D. programs must be completed within eight years.

The formal acceptance of a plan of study will then establish the courses, experiences, and research endeavors expected in meeting the degree requirements of the program. Prerequisite deficiencies should be included in the *Plan of Study*, although they may not contribute to the minimum credit requirements for the degree. The curriculum will ordinarily culminate with a general comprehensive examination and/or defense of thesis or dissertation. Graduate students pursue a plan of study under either Plan A, which requires a thesis, or Plan B, which does not.

Ordinarily a plan of study will include from 30 to 36 semester hours of graduate course work (including supervised research and research tools) for a Master's degree and 90 semester hours (beyond the bachelor's degree) of course work, independent study, and research for a Doctor's degree. In addition, all doctoral programs and Plan A Master's programs require a dissertation or thesis that represents a significant contribution to the literature of the field. No graduate degree is awarded on the basis of course work alone, but is awarded on the basis of demonstrated proficiency in the field. Specific requirements and opportunities for studies are detailed under the program descriptions.

## Policy Statement on Readings and Independent Study Courses

Readings and independent study courses represent an important method for instruction of graduate students who wish to pursue special interests in their degree programs. Ordinarily, not more than two such courses (6 semester hours) should be included in a 30-semester-hour program, since student interaction and student thesis research should occupy

the major program commitment. Prior to authorization of Readings and/or Independent Study credit, program directors will require a written summary of what work will be undertaken, identification of the specific resources to be used, the frequency of meetings between the student and his/her instructor, and the method of assigning quality evaluation to the project. A copy of the summary should be given to the student and the original should be maintained in the student's departmental file until final review to certify degree requirements. This policy is intended to assure graduate-level instruction for the students, and to better define the responsibilities of students and their mentors for completion of graduate readings and independent study projects that are assigned degree credit. A copy of each contract will be kept in the student's file.