General Requirements

Current Policy

All master's degree programs require a minimum of 45 graduate credits including thesis (6 to 12 credits) or research-in-lieu-of-thesis (3 to 6 credits). Exceptions to this capstone requirement are specified under the degree descriptions that follow these universal master's degree requirements. Effective fall 2005, all graduate student programs of study submitted to the Graduate School must consist of, at a minimum, 50 percent graduate stand-alone courses. The remaining credits may be the 500 component of 400/500 slash courses. General regulations for all master's programs are cited here, with certain exceptions provided for master's degrees in the professional areas listed on the following pages.

All master's students must:

a. Conduct research or produce some other form of creative work, and
b. Demonstrate mastery of subject material, and
c. Be able to conduct scholarly or professional activities in an ethical manner

The assessment of these outcomes and the specification of learning objectives related to these outcomes are to be carried out at the program level.

Proposed changes:

All master's degree programs require a minimum of 45 graduate credits including thesis (6 to 12 credits), research-in-lieu-of-thesis (3 to 6 credits), or an integrative capstone experience (3 to 6 credits). …

All master's students must:

a. Conduct research, produce some other form of creative work, or participate in an integrative capstone experience and

Add the following at the end of this section

All MS and MA degrees are required to complete a thesis or research-in-lieu-of-thesis. Graduate degrees other than the MS/MA (for example, EdM, MAT, MBA, MPH, MPP, etc.) may use an integrative capstone experience.

The integrative capstone experience must integrate concepts across multiple courses and is aligned with achieving program level learning outcomes. The integrative capstone experience may take the form of a culminating project, internship or field work directly related to the area of study, creative work, a portfolio or other collection of artifacts. The integrative capstone experience should be conducted outside of the didactic course requirements. The major professor is responsible for directing and assigning a final grade for the integrative capstone experience.
Final Examination
Current Policy
http://catalog.oregonstate.edu/ChapterDetail.aspx?key=39#Section2270

(paragraph numbering added)

1. Successful completion of a final oral examination is required for all master's degrees with the exception of students who complete the nonthesis option under the EdM degree. In those cases, nonthesis EdM students must take a final written examination. Some departments also require the student to pass a written exam prior to the oral exam.

2. The final oral examination for master's candidates may, at the discretion of the graduate program, consist of a public thesis defense followed by a closed session of the examining committee with the candidate. Under normal circumstances, the final oral examination should be scheduled for two hours.

3. For master's candidates whose programs require a thesis, not more than half of the examination period should be devoted to the presentation and defense of the thesis; the remaining time can be spent on questions relating to the student's knowledge of the major field, and minor field if a minor is included in the program of study. Graduate faculty serving on thesis-oriented master's degree programs may contribute to the direction of the student's thesis, will assess the student's thesis and his or her defense of it in the final oral examination, will vote to pass or fail the student, and may sign the thesis when it is in acceptable final form. The examining committee consists of at least four members of the graduate faculty—two in the major field, one in the minor field if a minor is included, and a Graduate Council representative. When a minor is not included, the fourth member may be from the graduate faculty at large. All members of the student's graduate committee must approve the scheduling of the final examination.

4. Students writing a thesis must have a Graduate Council representative on their committee. It is the student's responsibility to obtain his or her own Graduate Council representative from a list provided by the Graduate School. This must be done prior to scheduling the final exam.

5. When no thesis is involved, not more than half of the examination period should be devoted to the presentation of the research project; the remaining time can be spent on questions relating to the student's knowledge of the major field, and minor field if one is included in the program. For nonthesis master's degree programs, the major professor is responsible for directing and assigning a final grade for the research or culminating project. Other members of the nonthesis committee will assess the student's defense of the project in the final oral examination, as well as the student's knowledge of his or her field, and vote to pass or fail the student. The examining committee consists of three members of the graduate faculty—two in the major field and one in the minor field if a minor is included. When a minor is not included, the third member may be from the graduate faculty at large.
Final Examination

Assessment of university and program-level learning outcomes is required for each master's degree program. A final examination is required as a summative assessment to ensure that learning outcomes are being met.

Final Oral Examination – thesis-based programs

A final oral examination is required for all MS and MA degree programs, and all other graduate degree programs that involve completion of a thesis or research-in-lieu-of-thesis. The final oral examination for master's candidates may, at the discretion of the graduate program, consist of a public thesis defense followed by a closed session of the examining committee with the candidate. Under normal circumstances, the final oral examination should be scheduled for two hours.

For master's candidates whose programs require a thesis, not more than half of the examination period should be devoted to the presentation and defense of the thesis; the remaining time can be spent on questions relating to the student's knowledge of the major field, and minor field if a minor is included in the program of study. Graduate faculty serving on thesis-oriented master's degree programs may contribute to the direction of the student's thesis, will assess the student's thesis and his or her defense of it in the final oral examination, will vote to pass or fail the student, and may sign the thesis when it is in acceptable final form. The examining committee consists of at least four members of the graduate faculty—two in the major field, one in the minor field if a minor is included, and a Graduate Council representative. When a minor is not included, the fourth member may be from the graduate faculty at large. All members of the student's graduate committee must approve the scheduling of the final examination.

Students writing a thesis must have a Graduate Council representative on their committee. It is the student's responsibility to obtain his or her own Graduate Council representative from a list provided by the Graduate School. This must be done prior to scheduling the final exam.

Final Examination – non-thesis based programs

For non-thesis master's degree programs, a final cumulative examination is required. The format for the final examination may be written, oral, or a combination of written and oral. Other mechanisms may be used for assessment of learning outcomes at the individual level for non-thesis programs if approved by both the Graduate School and the Graduate Council.

The major professor is responsible for directing and assigning a final grade for the integrative capstone experience. Other members of the examining committee will assess the integrative capstone experience as well as the student's knowledge of his or her field, and vote to pass or fail the student.

The examining committee consists of three members of the graduate faculty—two in the major field and one in the minor field if a minor is included. When a minor is not included, the third member may be from the graduate faculty at large.

The major professor is responsible for directing and assigning a final grade for the integrative capstone experience. Other members of the examining committee will assess the integrative capstone experience as well as the student's knowledge of his or her field, and vote to pass or fail the student.
If a final oral examination is used, not more than half of the examination period should be devoted to the presentation of the integrative capstone experience; the remaining time can be spent on questions relating to the student's knowledge of the major field, and minor field if one is included in the program.

If a written final exam is used, the same three-person faculty committee that evaluated the integrative capstone experience will also evaluate the results of the written exam and incorporate these results into the vote to pass or fail the student.