Requirements

Below is a table outlining the degree requirements for each of the degree seeking options. Following the table is the description for each requirement.

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<th>No thesis</th>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive examination</td>
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Explanation of requirements

Time limit

**PhD Candidates:**
Doctoral degree candidates must complete all degree requirements within 7 calendar years. During this time, the student must enroll for at least 2 consecutive semesters of full-time study. A minimum of 60 credits of graduate work must be accumulated during the duration of the graduate program under the direct supervision of the student’s academic advisor, either the program director or the research advisor.

Students with the MS Degree: Doctoral degree candidates who enter a program of study at the College with a MS degree or who earn the MS degree at the College and wish to continue study toward the PhD degree must complete all requirements for the PhD degree within 5 calendar years, unless the graduate program or department determines that the MS degree is in an unrelated field. In that case, the 7 year degree completion time interval will apply. In either case, the student must enroll for at least 2 consecutive semesters of full-time study and accumulate a minimum of 60 credits of graduate work during the duration of the doctoral program.

**MA and MS Candidates:**
Masters degree candidates must complete all degree requirements within 4 calendar years. During this time, the student must enroll for at least 2 consecutive semesters with 6 credits per semester. A minimum of 30 credits of graduate work must be accumulated during the duration of the graduate program.

**MPH Candidates:**
MPH degree candidates must complete all degree requirements within 5 calendar years. During this time, the student must enroll for at least two (2) consecutive semesters with 6 credits per semester. A minimum of 42 credits of graduate work
must be accumulated during the duration of the graduate program. These credits are drawn from required and elective courses. The common required courses are: Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Administration, Environmental Health, Behavioral Science and the Final Project.

**Academic Standing**

**PhD Candidates:**
Students must remain in good academic standing, defined as at least a “B” average in courses and an “S” or better performance in other components of the academic program to be eligible to take the PhD qualifying examination and to be eligible for graduation.

**MA, MPH and MS Candidates:**
Students must remain in good academic standing, defined as at least a “B” average in courses and an “S” or better performance in other components of the academic program to be eligible for degree award.

**Certificate Candidates:**
Students must remain in good academic standing, defined as at least a “B” average in courses and an “S” or better performance in other components of the academic program to be eligible for certificate completion.

**Comprehensive Examination**

**MA Candidates only:**
Satisfactory performance on the MA comprehensive examination is required. The exam is to be taken upon completion of the four core courses required for the degree. Upon successful completion of the examination the student will declare intent to write a thesis or intent to pursue the non-thesis option by writing a publishable paper to complete the degree.

**Non-Thesis Option (MA Degree only):**
A Master of Arts student must complete a minimum of 30 credit hours of course work including the core curriculum. In lieu of a thesis, students write a final paper of publishable quality. Upon passing the Comprehensive exam an advisor must be determined to provide feedback throughout the writing process. Once all of the course credit requirements have been fulfilled and the final paper has been submitted, the program will be completed by means of a successful oral public defense.

**Qualifying Examination**

Satisfactory performance on the PhD qualifying examination is required. Information about the nature and time of the examination is available from the program director. The examination has written and oral components, and surveys the student’s depth of knowledge in the major field and in related scientific areas. The examination may be retaken one time if the initial performance is unsatisfactory. Faculty who serve as a chairperson for a student’s qualifying exam need to complete a Qualifying Examination Chairperson’s Report. The examination outcome(s) are forwarded to the Dean.

Advancement to PhD Candidacy: Upon recommendation of the research advisor and the department/program chair, and upon receipt of the approved dissertation outline, the Dean will notify the student of advancement of candidacy for the PhD degree. Continuation of candidacy status is dependent upon continued satisfactory evaluation of the student by the faculty and the Dean.
Advisor

The research advisor, a member of the full-time MCW faculty and a member of the graduate faculty, is selected by mutual agreement between the student, the proposed advisor, the program director, and the departmental or program chair. For doctoral students and masters thesis students, the advisor must be on the list of approved mentors as established by the Faculty Credentials Committee of the Graduate Studies Council. Every effort is made to assist students in securing the laboratory and research advisor of choice. However, acceptance into a degree program does not commit the College to find a research advisor for the student. If no faculty member in the program is available or willing to serve as research advisor, the student may not be able to complete the academic program.

Advising students in a graduate program of study at MCW is initially the responsibility of the program director for the graduate program. This individual is obligated to counsel students in planning for initial course work and in exploring research opportunities with various members of the graduate faculty.

Within the first 18 months of graduate study, the student is expected to negotiate with a faculty member for participation in the faculty member's research program. This negotiation culminates in assumption by the faculty member of responsibility for continued advising, counseling and funding as the student's research advisor.

Committees

**MA and MS Candidates:**
The Thesis Committee is constituted when the student and the research advisor have secured the consent of appropriate faculty to serve on the Committee, and when the Committee composition has been approved by the Dean. The Committee must have at least three members, one of whom is the research advisor.

**PhD Candidates:**
The Dissertation Committee is constituted when the student and the research advisor have secured the consent of five appropriate scientists (including the advisor) to serve, and when the Committee has been approved by the Dean. It must have at least one faculty member from a department outside that of the student's degree program, and may include one individual who is from another institution.

Committee composition must be approved by the Dean and by the Graduate Faculty Credentials Committee if there is a question about thesis/dissertation committee appointment(s). "**Request for Approval of a Thesis/Dissertation Committee**" form. A Biosketch is required for each committee member who does not appear in the Graduate School Bulletin list of faculty members.

Proposal

The student and his/her advisor should discuss potential areas of research and agree upon a reasonable hypothesis to be tested by the student. Previous research results that are relevant to the hypothesis and further experimental approaches to test the hypothesis should be discussed. These discussions will provide a basis for a written proposal that describes the research project that the student will initially pursue for his/her dissertation research. It is understood and accepted by all concerned that this initial project may be modified significantly or abandoned as a consequence of future developments.
The purpose of the research proposal is:

- To ensure that the student gains an understanding of the current status of research within his or her chosen area;
- To train the student in the scientific method;
- To ensure that both the student and advisor agree on a research project that has the potential to generate meaningful data.

An outline of the proposed thesis research should be presented to and approved by the Committee, and forwarded to the Dean for approval prior to initiation of the major portion of the research (not less than 18 months prior to the dissertation defense date for the PhD candidates). *See further detailed information on p. 27

**Advancement to candidacy**

**PhD Candidates:**
Upon recommendation of the research advisor and the department/program chair, and upon receipt of the approved dissertation outline, the Dean will notify the student of advancement to candidacy for the PhD degree. Continuation of candidacy status is dependent upon continued satisfactory evaluation of the student by the faculty and the Dean.

**Preliminary Copy**

**MA and MS and PhD Candidates:**
A preliminary copy must be submitted to the Committee and Dean two weeks prior to the thesis defense. Students completing their academic programs should consult the Graduate School academic calendar concerning the applicable deadline dates.

**Defense**

A defense is required, and should be scheduled by mutual agreement between the student, advisor, the department or program chair, and the Committee. *See further detailed information on p. 29

**Other Requirements**

Any additional academic requirements of the department or program and of the Graduate School must be met. This includes financial and library obligations.

**Approval and Submission**

Final copies of the thesis/dissertation, including any changes required by the Committee, must be submitted to the Dean within 2 weeks following the defense or of a final Committee meeting. The degree application will then be signed.

**Degree Application**

When the above requirements have been met, the degree application may be submitted for approvals and signatures to the Department or Program Chair and then to the Dean.

**Commencement**

Three graduation dates exist for graduate students at the Medical College of Wisconsin. These dates are set each year to occur in mid-late January, mid-late May and mid-late September. For each graduating student, the graduation date is the next available date after the student completes all requirements for a degree. Only one formal Commencement exercise is held each year, and is always scheduled for mid-late May. All students receiving their degrees in the preceding September or
January, as well as all graduate students finishing in May, are expected to participate in the Commencement exercise.

*Please see the Final Checklist for Graduation and Commencement applicable to your degree program.*

**Certificate Request**

Certificate seekers enrolled in the last course toward certificate completion should complete and submit the “Request for a Graduate Certificate” form.