The master’s and doctoral special graduate committee guidelines are:

research and coursework. And there is not the usual collegial group of students in closely related

of independence is required on the part of the student, since easily

in new and emerging fields or combinations of disciplines. A higher degree

joint degrees, distributed minors, etc.) and may permit individual degrees

approved programs (e.g., by existing major program/minor combinations,

around unique needs of individual students that cannot be satisfied by

they are interested in working.

Special graduate committee degrees are one-of-a-kind degrees built

around unique needs of individual students that cannot be satisfied by

approved programs (e.g., by existing major program/minor combinations,

joint degrees, distributed minors, etc.) and may permit individual degrees

in new and emerging fields or combinations of disciplines. A higher degree

of independence is required on the part of the student, since easily

available guidance provided by programs is often more difficult to obtain,

and there is not the usual collegial group of students in closely related

research and coursework.

The Graduate School can authorize special committees to supervise

master’s or doctoral programs for students whose needs cannot be met

within an established program. Students must first be accepted into a

graduate–degree-granting program and establish one semester of full-
time graduate work at UW–Madison, and then the faculty advisor should

submit a proposal for a special committee degree. Students should check

with the Graduate School and the individual faculty member with whom

they are interested in working.

Special graduate committee degrees are one-of-a-kind degrees built

around unique needs of individual students that cannot be satisfied by

approved programs (e.g., by existing major program/minor combinations,

joint degrees, distributed minors, etc.) and may permit individual degrees

in new and emerging fields or combinations of disciplines. A higher degree

of independence is required on the part of the student, since easily

available guidance provided by programs is often more difficult to obtain,

and there is not the usual collegial group of students in closely related

research and coursework.

ADMISSIONS

The master’s and doctoral special graduate committee guidelines are:

1. Prospective students who may have an interest in a special graduate

   committee degree should apply to the degree program that is closest
   to their program interest.

2. Upon receipt of an application on which a prospective student has

   expressed interest in a special graduate committee degree, the
   program will follow all relevant program admission requirements.

3. Students may not be admitted directly to a special graduate

   committee degree program. They must be accepted for admission
   by an established department or program and be attending classes
   at UW–Madison before a proposal for a special graduate committee
   degree will be considered by the Graduate School.

4. The department or program admitting the student must be prepared

   to see the student through an established degree program. No
   commitments are made to provide a special graduate committee
   degree until after the student is enrolled and the proposal for the
   special degree and the student's ability at the graduate level have
   been evaluated and approved.

5. The student’s advisor authors and submits the special graduate

   committee degree proposal on behalf of the student as early in the
   student’s program as possible. Proposals submitted after a substantial
   portion of the program has been completed will not be accepted.
   Doctoral proposals must be submitted by the end of the first year
   of graduate work. Master’s proposals must be submitted after the
   equivalent of the first full-time semester of graduate work. The
   proposal should consist of the following elements:

   • The reasons the special graduate committee program is needed
     and an explanation of why the student’s needs cannot be met
     within existing programs.
   • The exact title of the proposed degree program (which should be
     brief and descriptive).
   • The proposed course and seminar program of graduate work on
     this campus. Include the course title, program, course number,
     credits, grade, and semester taken/to be taken.
   • Any specific requirements of the dissertation or thesis (language,
     equipment, etc.).
   • The nature and scope of preliminary examinations for the doctoral
     degree, or the examination procedure for the master's degree.
   • The nature of the dissertation or thesis (general subject area).
   • The names of the faculty members who, in addition to the advisor,
     are willing to share the responsibility of supervising the student’s
     program. Including the advisor, the doctoral degree requires
     five members (including four UW–Madison graduate faculty
     members), and the master’s degree requires three members
     (including two UW–Madison graduate faculty members). Approval
     signatures of the committee members are required on the
     proposal.

6. The Graduate School will carefully review proposals to determine

   whether or not the program can be carried out within an established
   department or program, joint degrees, appropriate use of minors, or
   other available mechanisms. The suitability and degree of commitment
   of the committee for the proposed program will be examined.

7. The chairperson of the committee (usually the advisor) should be

   a member of the program to which the student originally had been
   admitted. That program should remain the keeper of the student’s
   records and should make all appropriate nominations for financial aid.

8. The Graduate School is concerned about maintaining active

   participation by all members of special degree committees in the
   ongoing program of the student and asks the individual members
   of the committee to assume program responsibilities provided
   institutionally in a conventional program. Faculty members who are
   willing to serve on these committees should be prepared to participate
   fully in all aspects of the student’s program from the beginning,
   especially where they must provide the necessary expertise in their
   particular areas of interest.

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress

and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/

#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements

listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Since the curriculum of the special graduate committee degree will vary,

students must work closely with their faculty advisor and committee

to make sure they are completing all necessary coursework and other

requirements.