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

grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#specialgraduatecommitteedegrees

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

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Special Graduate Committee, M.S.

(via Graduate School Academic Policies & Procedures (https://

grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#specialgraduatecommitteedegrees))

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

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joint degrees, distributed minors, and so on) and may permit individual

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higher degree of independence is required on the part of the student,

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difficult to obtain, and there is not the usual collegial group of students in

closely related research and coursework.

ADMISSIONS

(via Graduate School Academic Policies & Procedures (https://

grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#specialgraduatecommitteedegrees))

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.

REQUIREMENTS

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.