The master's and doctoral special graduate committee guidelines are:
grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#specialgraduatecommitteedegrees

closely related research and coursework. since easily available guidance provided by programs is often more
higher degree of independence is required on the part of the student, degrees in new and emerging fields or combinations of disciplines. A
joint degrees, distributed minors, and so on) and may permit individual
approved programs (e.g., by existing major program/minor combinations,
Special graduate committee degrees are one-of-a-kind degrees built
within an established program. Students must first be accepted into a
master's or doctoral programs for students whose needs cannot be met
within an established program. 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

The Student's advisor authors and submits the 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.