

SECTION #: 2.0 ACADEMIC

SUBJECT: GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Background: This policy defines the scope and requirements for Master's Programs at LC State.

Point of Contact: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Other LC State offices directly involved with implementation of this policy, or significantly affected by the policy: Dean of Graduate Studies, Registrar & Records, Faculty Senate

Date of approval by LC State authority: 1/12/2026

Date of State Board Approval: N/A

Date of Most Recent Review: Date of most recent review.

Summary of Major Changes incorporated in this revision to the policy: New Policy

1. General Purpose

- A. The purpose of this policy is to define the expectations and set forth minimum requirements for graduate programs at LC State.

2. Definitions

- A. Institutional Credits: Courses taken from LC State after being admitted to a program.

3. Masters' Degrees

- A. Minimum Credits.
 - i. A master's degree requires successful completion of at least thirty (30) semester credits. Individual programs may stipulate credits beyond this minimum.
- B. Plan Types: Thesis Plan, or Non-Thesis Plan.
 - i. Thesis Plan (Plan A). Programs may require a thesis. Under this plan, the program must include a minimum of twenty-seven (27) course credits and a minimum of three (3) thesis credits consistent with program requirements. Total credits required per plan must be published in the Graduate Handbook.
 - ii. Non-Thesis Plans (Plan B). Programs that do not require a thesis must include at least thirty (30) graduate course credits and a culminating experience (e.g., comprehensive exam, project, capstone). The culminating experience may be included in the thirty (30) graduate course credits. Thesis research credits do not apply to non-thesis plans.
- C. Credit Distribution and Level.
 - i. Major Credits:
 - a) A minimum of eighteen (18) credits in the major or as specified by the program.
 - ii. Advanced Coursework:
 - a) A substantial portion of credit toward the degree must be earned at the five hundred (500) level. Undergraduate courses (300 and 400 level) may be part of a student's course of study and applied toward graduate degree requirements when consistent with program and Graduate Studies policies. Individual programs may set specific level minimums.

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- b) Any undergraduate course applied towards graduate degree requirements must have a level of rigor appropriate to the graduate program, must be aligned with the program's outcomes, and must be vetted by Graduate Studies.
 - c) Courses at the three hundred (300) level may not be applied to the minimum of eighteen (18) credits in the major, except as approved by Graduate Studies.
 - D. Institutional Credits, Transfer Credits, and Double-Counting.
 - i. At least twenty-one (21) credits applicable to degree requirements must be earned through LC State, as defined by Graduate Studies; individual programs may establish higher minimum institutional credit requirements.
 - ii. Transfer credits must meet the standards set forth by Graduate Studies and receive approval to be applied to a graduate program. No more than nine (9) credits may be transferred to LC State. Transfer limits for individual programs may be different and must be published in the Graduate Handbook.
 - iii. Credits applied to a completed degree elsewhere generally may not be reused to satisfy graduate degree requirements at LC State.
 - E. Academic Standing.
 - i. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 for credits applied to the degree. Individual programs may impose higher minimum grade requirements.
 - F. Time Limit.
 - i. All degree requirements must be completed within six (6) years from initial enrollment in the master's program unless an approved extension is granted.
 - G. Culminating Experience.
 - i. Each master's program will require a culminating experience appropriate to the discipline (e.g., thesis, comprehensive exam, capstone project, supervised field experience) and will clearly articulate its standards.
 - H. Program-Specific Requirements.
 - i. Departments may establish additional requirements for a graduate program (e.g., language proficiency, comprehensive examinations, project/thesis credit ranges) provided that the additional requirements meet or exceed minimums set forth by Graduate Studies. All additional program-specific requirements must be clearly published in the Graduate Handbook.
- 4. Graduate Certificates
 - A. Minimum Credits.
 - i. A graduate certificate requires successful completion of at least twelve (12) semester credits. Individual programs may stipulate credits beyond this minimum.
 - B. Plan Type: Practitioner-Based
 - i. Each certificate is practitioner-based and focused on providing students with exposure to critical skills and effective best practices that are aligned with national standards.
 - C. Credit Distribution and Level.
 - i. Program Credits.
 - a) All credits toward the certificate must be earned at the five hundred (500) level.
 - D. Institutional Credits and Transfer Credits.
 - i. All credits toward the certificate must be earned from LC State.

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- ii. Transfer credits are not permitted for graduate certificates from LC State.
- E. Academic Standing.
 - i. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 for credits applied to the degree. Individual programs may impose higher minimum grade requirements.
- F. Time Limit.
 - i. All certificate requirements must be completed within four (4) years from initial enrollment in the certificate program unless an approved extension is granted.
- G. Culminating Experience.
 - i. Each certificate program will require a culminating experience appropriate to the discipline (i.e., capstone, internship, practicum) and will clearly articulate its standards.
- H. Program-Specific Requirements
 - i. Departments may establish additional requirements for a certificate program (e.g., language proficiency, examinations, credit ranges) provided that the additional requirements meet or exceed minimums set forth by Graduate Studies. All additional program-specific requirements must be clearly published in the Graduate Handbook.