Section 3: Master's Degrees

The Master of Arts degree is conferred upon a candidate who has completed all requirements in any one of the fields of humanistic studies and social sciences. Candidates in mathematics, the natural sciences, and the physical sciences may elect to receive the Master of Science or the Master of Arts degree. Only a few programs accept applicants solely for master's study. Students admitted to terminal master’s degree programs at Emory may not subsequently pursue a doctoral program without submitting a complete application to the PhD program.

Click on a topic below for more information about:

- (A) Fields of study
- (B) Master's on the basis of candidacy and interim Master's degrees
- (C) Minimum degree requirements
- (D) Language and/or methodology requirements
- (E) Thesis
- (F) Maximum time to complete the degree

(A) Fields of Study

Several Laney graduate programs offer a terminal Master's degree. Click here to view our Degree Programs page. Additionally, LGS also offers several 4+1 master's degrees.

(B) Master's on the basis of candidacy and Interim Master's degrees

Some, but not all, programs allow students to earn the Master’s degree on the basis of doctoral candidacy. A student who has been granted program approval to file for the Master’s on the basis of candidacy must meet all LGS and program requirements for the Master’s degree (except for the thesis), and must submit a Master's degree clearance form to LGS.

Students who plan to apply for an interim master's degree should be in candidacy prior to applying for the degree. LGS will not award a Master’s degree on the basis of candidacy retroactively after a student has completed the PhD; therefore students must apply for the Master’s degree immediately upon reaching eligibility.

(C) Minimum Degree Requirements

The Laney Graduate School sets minimum requirements for the Master’s degree. Some programs, especially those offering terminal Master’s degrees, require considerably more course activity than the minimum listed below, and many have substituted other requirements for the examination, foreign language, and thesis. The fulfillment of course activity alone does not lead to a Master’s degree.

Satisfactory completion of at least 30 credit hours is required as follows:

- At least 15 hours must be in courses or seminars, not including Directed Study 597 or Research 599.
- At least 11 hours in courses must be on the 500 or 700 levels.
- A grade of B- or better must be earned in at least 11 hours of courses taken.
• No course on the 100 or 200 level may be applied to a master’s degree program.

(D) Language and/or Methodology Requirements

The requirement of foreign languages or other research skills, such as computer technology and statistics, varies with the nature of the student’s research and the relevance of the languages or tools to the student’s study. Students should consult their programs for specific details.

(E) Thesis

The student must submit an acceptable thesis demonstrating an ability to use the methods of advanced investigation or research. The nature of the thesis, as well as its form, varies among the different fields. The thesis is submitted to LGS after approval by the student’s advisory committee. The student’s advisory committee requires three members of the LGS graduate faculty. The Dean of the Laney Graduate School reviews every thesis. Any errors, including errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation, may result in the thesis being returned for correction. Deadlines for submitting a thesis to the Dean are listed in the academic calendar. Students must be registered in the semester in which they receive the degree. Before the Dean accepts the thesis, the program must certify that the student has completed all requirements for the degree.

(F) Maximum Time to Complete the Degree

A student must complete all requirements for a terminal Master’s degree within five years of admission. Extensions beyond this period will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. Programs may grant a single one-year extension beyond the five-year limit. The program will notify the Dean of the Laney Graduate School, forwarding the student’s written request and the program’s official response. A student beyond the five-year limit who fails to obtain an extension from his/her program or exhausts the extension granted without completing requirements for the degree will no longer be considered a degree candidate. No requests for additional time will be considered except by application to the Dean of the Laney Graduate School with strong support of the program.

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