

Information for Graduate Students

Welcome to the Graduate School on the Denver Campus. Almost half of our students on the Denver Campus are enrolled in graduate programs. We have a higher ratio of graduate to undergraduate students than most other universities in the country. This special emphasis on graduate education provides a strong culture of graduate studies on the campus and has engendered a number of innovative programs and teaching methods, such as dual master's degrees or classes that are entirely online. Graduate programs on the Denver Campus also benefit from CU Denver's immediate proximity to the city, which provides rich opportunities for internships and employment, collaborations between the university and the city and a wealth of real world problems that can test and elaborate ideas gained in the classroom.

A list of all graduate programs is available in the [Academic Programs section](#) of the CU Denver website.

The Denver Campus Graduate School offers 31 master's programs and 11 PhD programs. In addition, schools and colleges offer other master's programs that are independently accredited and are not housed in the Graduate School. For students in those programs, most of your needs will be met by the department in which your program resides. Information about these graduate programs is available under the specific school or college in this catalog. However some programs, those having a diamond designation ("Graduate School Rules apply to the program"), are programs within the Graduate School and follow the rules outlined in this section.

The colleges and schools offering graduate opportunities on the Denver Campus include:

- College of Architecture and Planning
- College of Arts & Media
- Business School
- School of Education & Human Development
- College of Engineering and Applied Science
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- School of Public Affairs

Individual graduate programs are described within the school/college sections of the catalog.

Graduate School

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Graduate education is a central component of the mission of the University of Colorado Denver. The Graduate School is one of several schools within CU Denver, and its mission is to facilitate and enhance the educational experiences and opportunities for all graduate students and to encourage excellence in research, creative and scholarly work.

In accordance with this mission, the Graduate School leadership, together with the graduate faculty, plans, develops, approves, evaluates and administers graduate programs (PhD and master's degree programs) and certificate programs. The Graduate School also ensures that graduate programs comply with, or exceed, the Graduate School's standards of excellence and execute sound academic administration as established by the [Rules and Policies of the Graduate School](#) and adopted by the University Board of Regents and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. In particular, the Graduate School is charged with maintaining high standards and quality of both the graduate programs and the graduate faculty. Other functions of the Graduate School include:

- a) Developing and fostering multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and innovative programs and promoting collaborations that create unique opportunities for student learning, research and discovery;
- b) Formulating and maintaining uniform standards for academic excellence in graduate-level courses and research experiences offered for credit;
- c) Promoting a supportive environment for the graduate student community;
- d) Providing a voice for graduate education in the University's strategic planning; and
- e) Publishing a current Graduate School Student Handbook on the Graduate School website.

See [Graduate School Rules 11-12](#).

Requirements for Admission

Note that the following are minimum requirements. College and school regulations, if more stringent, take precedence over the minimum guidelines as set forth by the Graduate School.

REGULAR DEGREE STUDENTS

Students are admitted by the Graduate School as regular degree students provided they meet the following criteria:

- Hold a baccalaureate or master's degree from an accredited college or university or demonstrate completion of work equivalent to the baccalaureate or master's degree given at CU Denver. Applicants whose credentials include studies or course work at an institution outside the United States must include a validated English translation and an evaluation of the transcript by a professional accrediting service (such as World Education Services).
- Usually have an undergraduate grade point average of 3.00 or better (*A* is equal to 4.0) and/or a 3.00 or better GPA in a completed or partially completed (at least 1/3) master's

degree program. Applications from individuals who attended a college or university that does not issue grades or a GPA will be evaluated by the Graduate School on a case-by-case basis.

- Have adequate preparation to enter graduate study in the chosen program as demonstrated by their performance in the GRE or an appropriate substitute (i.e., MCAT, an earned MS/MA or PhD from a school in the United States, or completion of at least 12 credit hours of transferable graduate-level course work from an accredited US college or university). Although the Graduate School recommends that applicants take the GRE or other standardized test, it is not a requirement for admission as a regular degree student if one of the other two indicators of preparedness is present. Some graduate programs, however, may require that all applicants take the GRE or an equivalent.
- Meet any additional requirements (such as particular undergraduate course work) for admission as established by the program.
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International students must meet ALL of these requirements and also must provide:

- Documentation in English (or a certified English translation) of the completion of a bachelor's degree, master's degree or the equivalent at the time of matriculation as evaluated by the [International Admissions](#) Office.
- Applicants whose native language is not English must take either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam, and must score above 537 (paper) or 203 (computer) or 75 (Internet based) on the TOEFL or 6.5 on the IELTS. Schools, colleges or individual graduate programs may require higher standards on these tests.
- Applicants whose native language is not English are not required to take the TOEFL test if they have completed a baccalaureate or graduate-level degree program at an English-speaking college or university, or have completed at least 30 semester hours at a college or university in the United States and obtained a *B* average (3.0 GPA) or higher.
- Financial and other documents required by the [International Scholars and Students Office](#) to process immigration documents.
- A certified English translation of all records and references not in English.
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Additional requirements and documentation may also be required.

PROVISIONAL DEGREE STUDENTS

A graduate program that wishes to admit an applicant who does not meet the criteria for admission as a regular degree student can petition the Graduate School to admit the applicant as either a regular or provisional degree student. The petition must include a letter from the graduate program director to the dean that outlines the rationale to support such an admission. If the student is to be admitted as a provisional student, then the petition must include a description of the conditions that the student must meet in order to become a regular degree student. The admission of the applicant as a provisional degree student requires the approval of the dean.

Based on the requirements of the graduate program and the recommendations of the graduate program director, the dean will determine and advise the program director and the student of the conditions that the student must satisfy to be transferred from provisional to regular status. The dean, in consultation with the program director, will also determine the time period (one or two semesters for full-time students and a maximum of four semesters for part-time students) in which these conditions are met.

Provisional students are subject to the same standards of performance required of regular degree students, plus any other requirements imposed by program faculty as conditions of admission. At the end of the specified probationary period, the dean, in consultation with the program director, will review the performance of the provisional student. The student must either have satisfied the requirements for conversion and be admitted to regular degree status or be dismissed from the graduate program to which they were provisionally admitted. The Graduate School will notify both the program director and the student whether the provisional student has satisfied the requirements and that their status has been converted to that of a regular student, or has failed to meet the requirements and has been dismissed.

Application Procedures

Applicants seeking admission to CU Denver's graduate programs should apply online at:

https://soa.prod.cu.edu/degreeprog/applyDEGREEPROG_CUDEN/login.action

rather than to the department or the Office of Admissions. Refer to department/program sections in this catalog for more information regarding specific application instructions and requirements. Online applications are submitted electronically to the department processing your application. Most supplementary application materials will be uploaded in the online application, but items such as transcripts should be mailed to the address listed in the online application. International applicants, except those to the Business School and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, should mail supplementary materials to the [Office of International Affairs](#). Applicants to the Business School should forward their materials directly to the Business School, and those applying to programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences should forward their materials to the Graduate School (which processes their admissions applications). International applicants should refer to the [Information for International Students](#) chapter for more information regarding specific application instructions and requirements.

Be sure to clearly mark the supplementary materials with your full name, social security number, the department to which you are applying and contents of the supplementary material. In addition, sufficient postage must be included if the materials are to be returned to the applicant. If applying to more than one department, you must submit a complete application and separate fee to each department. Students will receive offers of admission or rejection from the graduate department to which they are applying.

An applicant for admission must present:

- Submitted online application

- Two official transcripts for all academic work in colleges and universities completed to date.
- Three letters of reference. The online application will automatically send recommendation forms to the recommenders indicated on the application. Electronic recommendation letters are submitted to the department processing your application. If recommenders prefer to send letters in the mail, then provide the address listed in the online application or obtain the address for the specific department to which you are applying.
- A nonrefundable application fee of \$50 for domestic students or \$75 for international students. *No application will be processed until this fee is paid.*
- Any other material required specifically by the program faculty. This may include scores from the GRE or other examination. Check with program coordinators in the departments for additional information that may be required.

• *Remember, you must check with the program for the deadline for submitting the application and application fee amount for the program of interest.*

When a prospective degree student applies for admission, the chairperson or a student admissions committee of the department will decide whether the applicant shall be admitted and make that decision known to the Office of Admissions.

Students who wish to apply for a graduate student award (e.g., fellowship, scholarship, assistantship) should contact their department before the application deadline for information, since deadlines are usually earlier for aid requests than for admission.

READMISSION/CHANGING PROGRAMS

Former and current students who wish to be re-admitted or change from one degree program to another must meet the requirements of the new degree program and provide all items required of students applying to the Graduate School on the Denver Campus for the first time. These applicants, however, may petition the program to which they were initially admitted to secure a release of transcripts and letters of recommendation supplied at the time of their initial application.

TRANSFERRING

Students transferring from another University of Colorado campus to the Denver Campus must apply and be accepted by the program on this campus.

A student who has completed a master's program at CU Denver must resubmit an online graduate application for acceptance into the doctoral program.

NONDEGREE STUDENTS

A student who wishes to take graduate courses, but is not interested in earning a specific advanced degree, may apply as a nondegree student at:

https://soa.prod.cu.edu/degreeprog/applyDEGREEPROG_CUDEN/login.action

Contact the Office of Admissions at 303-556-2704 for further information. Nondegree students will be allowed to register only on the campus to which they have been admitted.

Nondegree students who later desire to pursue a graduate degree program at this university are encouraged to submit the complete online graduate application and supporting credentials as soon as possible. Credits earned as a nondegree student at the University of Colorado may, at the discretion of the department to which the student is admitted, be transferred in to a degree program. The maximum amount of credits allowed for transfer is 12 semester hours or 40 percent of the number of credits required for the master's degree (whichever is higher), and 30 hours for PhD degrees. These limit totals include both nondegree CU credits and those transferred from other institutions. Note that the GPA for courses taken as a nondegree student is calculated separately and is not incorporated in the official graduate GPA.

New Student Orientation

An orientation program for new students is held at the beginning of the fall semester, during the week prior to the first day of classes. The orientation program provides information to new students about activities and services available on the Denver Campus. Information on the expectations, opportunities, registration process, parking and securing ID cards is also provided. Academic advising sessions are held before registration for the term. Students should contact their schools and colleges for additional information on advising, as well as special orientation sessions that may be scheduled for their programs.

Registration

On the regular registration days of each semester, students who have been admitted to a graduate program are required to follow appropriate registration procedures.

Students should register for classes the semester they are accepted as graduate students. If unable to attend that semester, they must notify the Office of Admissions in addition to the department that has accepted them. If this is not done, the student is automatically classified as inactive in the program and will need to reapply for admission to be able to register in a later semester.

Withdrawal

A graduate student who desires to withdraw from the university must apply to the dean of his/her school or college for permission to withdraw in good standing. *A student who discontinues attendance in a course without official withdrawal will be marked as having failed the course. After the 10th week of the class, the student must have the associate dean's signature to drop a course.*

Assistantships and Fellowships

Graduate Student Teaching Appointments

Many departments employ graduate students as part-time instructors or teaching assistants. The instructorship is reserved for those advanced graduate students already possessing

appropriate degrees who may be independently responsible for the conduct of a section or course. Contact the department for further information.

Research Assistantships

Research activities provide opportunities for graduate students to obtain part-time work as research assistants in many departments. Such assistantships are funded by external grants obtained by faculty members. Contact the department for further information.

Additional information about registration and financial aid are available in separate sections of this catalog. For information about tuition and fees, please visit the Bursar's office [website](#).

Requirements for Advanced Degrees

Graduate Student Handbooks

Each graduate program is expected to provide students with a handbook—electronic, paper or both—indicating in some detail the curricular requirements, the expectations for satisfactory progress toward the degree completion, a timeline for the steps needed to meet these expectations and other features unique to each program (such as the composition and formation of thesis, project and dissertation committees to guide and review the student's progress).

GPA Requirements and Quality of Graduate Work

A student is expected to maintain a minimum overall 3.0 GPA in all work attempted while enrolled in a graduate program and to make satisfactory progress toward a degree in other respects, as determined by his or her department.

For all graduate degrees, a grade below *B*- is unsatisfactory and will not be counted toward the minimum requirements for these degrees. Courses required by the degree-granting program in which the student receives a grade below *B*- must be retaken in order to achieve a *B*- or better grade.

Credit by Transfer

A limited amount of high-quality resident graduate work done in a recognized graduate school elsewhere, or as a nondegree student at a University of Colorado campus, within the time allowed may be accepted, provided it is recommended by the department concerned and approved by the school or college dean. The maximum amount of work that may be transferred to this university is 12 semester hours or 40 percent of the number of credits required for the master's degree (whichever is higher), and 30 hours for PhD degrees.

Courses taken as pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory will not be transferred. In addition, a grade of *B*- or above must be earned for a course to be transferred (individual programs may require a *B* or better for transfer credit and/or may require a *B* or better in the core classes of the particular discipline). Courses taken some time ago will need to be validated by the program director.

Use of English

A student who is noticeably deficient in the use of standard English in all oral and written work may not obtain an advanced degree from the University of Colorado. Ability to use the language with precision and distinction should be cultivated as an attainment of major importance.

The university reserves the right to test English proficiency for nonnative speakers of English to confirm and validate sufficiency for credit-bearing course work and degree programs.

Each department will judge the qualifications of its advanced students in the use of English. Reports, examinations and speech will be considered in estimating the candidate's proficiency.

Graduate Appeals

If a school, college or graduate program has established its own procedures to consider academic grievances, then the student must follow these procedures before they can submit a grievance to the Graduate School. Only when a student has pursued all avenues for appeal within their school, college or program may they file a grievance with the Graduate School.

Grievance appeals cover problems related to academic issues, and are separate from issues regarding academic ethics and disciplinary cases (which are covered by separate procedures). Graduate students may appeal such issues as: faculty, program, departmental, college or school (including Graduate School) policies affecting individual student prerogatives, deviations from stated grading procedures (excluding individual grade challenges), unfair treatment and related issues. Please refer to Graduate School procedures for academic grievance as published in a separate policy document on the [website](#).

Master's Degree

A student regularly admitted to a graduate program and later accepted as a candidate for the master of arts, master of science or other master's degrees will be recommended for the degree only after certain requirements have been met.

The requirements stated below are minimum requirements; additional conditions may be set by the individual programs.

Students planning to graduate should ascertain current deadlines with their graduate programs. It is the graduate student's and the department's responsibility to see that all requirements and deadlines are met (e.g., changing of *I* and *IP* grades, notification of final examinations, etc.).

Departments or program committees may have deadlines that must be met by the graduate students in that specific department or program. It is the student's responsibility to ascertain and meet these requirements.

Minimum Requirements

The minimum requirement is 30 (semester) credits. While it is expected that most of this course work will be at the graduate (5000 and above) level, some graduate programs may allow

particular undergraduate courses that are outside the discipline of their program to count toward the graduate degree. The proportion of undergraduate credit hours cannot exceed 20% of the course requirements of the graduate program and must be approved by the program director on a case-by-case basis. Undergraduate courses within the same discipline as the graduate program cannot be credited toward a graduate degree. If the program has a thesis option, the thesis must count for 3-6 credits. Independent study course work cannot exceed 25 percent (7.5 credits) of the 30 credits of course work required for the master's degree.

Master's Thesis Credit

Master's students who are enrolled in a program or track that requires a thesis, must also register for a minimum of three and a maximum of six hours of thesis work (some colleges and schools have a four-hour minimum for thesis tracks). Once all required semester hours of thesis work have been taken and all other course work is completed, students may choose to register for Candidate for Degree (CAND 5940) for the semester in which they will defend their thesis. CAND 5940 carries no credit or grade, but students pay for one credit of resident tuition and minimal fees.

Thesis Requirements

Students who are enrolled in a program that requires a thesis must undertake their thesis work under the supervision of a thesis advisor and a faculty advisory committee. All research conducted for a master's degree must meet all appropriate regulatory standards specified by federal, state and local agencies regarding ethical research, animal use, human subjects, HIPAA and environmental safety. Each thesis is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master's degree and must meet the formatting criteria outlined in the [UC Denver Electronic Thesis and Dissertation guidelines](#). The Graduate School performs format review and approval for all theses prior to electronic submission. Theses must be successfully defended before the student's committee before final submission. Thesis fees are paid upon submission online.

A grade of In Progress (*IP*) will be assigned for thesis hours in all semesters until the final approved thesis is submitted to the Graduate School office. The thesis advisor determines the final thesis grade, and then submits Change of Record forms to the Graduate School office to change all *IP* grades to this final grade.

Admission to Candidacy

Students who wish to receive the master's degree must first become candidates. After completing or registering for all program-required course work, students must apply for graduation in their student portal and submit the signed Application for Admission to Candidacy to the student's respective school or college or to the Graduate School, by the graduation deadline posted for the semester in which they plan to graduate. The candidacy form is available online on the Graduate School website or from your program advisor.

An approved form certifies that a student's work is satisfactory and that the program curriculum entered on the candidacy form meets all of the requirements of both the Graduate School as well as the particular graduate program, and that the student is a candidate for the degree. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 to apply for candidacy.

Master's Degree Final Examination / Thesis Defense

All candidates for the master's degree are required to take a final comprehensive examination, present a cumulative professional portfolio or successfully defend a project or thesis. The final examination or defense is conducted by a committee consisting of at least three members of the graduate faculty. The student's final examination/defense committee and the examination schedule must be approved by the program director. The Request for Graduate Examination form must be submitted to the student's respective school or college, or to the Graduate School, one week prior to the final exam/defense.

The examination or defense may be oral, written or both, or may consist of an evaluation of the cumulative professional portfolio. The chairperson and student must be present for the oral examination or defense, but a minority of members of the committee may participate by interactive video. If *one* faculty member cannot be present due to an *emergency*, the exam can proceed with the faculty who can attend, and the student will schedule a separate meeting with the absent faculty member at an alternate time. A majority of the examination committee members must vote for one of the following examination outcomes: Pass, Conditional Pass or Fail. The original signed form is sent to the student's respective school or college, or to the Graduate School.

For a Conditional Pass, the examining committee will clearly define the requirements for the student to receive an unconditional passing grade; these requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of the examination committee within four months. Failure to satisfy these conditions will result in failure of the examination. A student who fails the examination is subject to immediate dismissal from the program on the recommendation of the graduate program and concurrence of the dean.

At the program's discretion, a student who fails the examination may be allowed to retake the exam. The retake must be completed by the end of the next academic semester. Both the original signed examination form noting the failure as well as the signed new exam form for the retake must be filed with the school, college or Graduate School office.

Time Limit

Master's students, whether enrolled full time or part time, have five (5) years from the start of course work to complete all degree requirements, including the filing of the thesis with the Graduate School if the program requires a thesis. Students who fail to complete the degree in this five-year period are subject to termination from the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the program director and concurrence of the Graduate School dean. For a student to continue beyond the time limit, the program director must petition the dean for an extension and include: 1) reasons why the program faculty believe the student should be allowed to continue in the program, and 2) an anticipated timeline for completion of the degree.

Doctor of Philosophy

The doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree is the highest academic degree conferred by the university. To state the requirements for the degree in terms of semester hours would be

misleading, because the degree is not conferred merely upon the satisfactory completion of a course of study, however faithfully pursued.

Students who receive this degree must demonstrate that they are proficient in some broad subject of learning and that they can critically evaluate work in this field. Furthermore, they must have shown the ability to work independently in their chosen field and must have made an original contribution of significance to the advancement of knowledge. The technical requirements stated below are minimal requirements for all candidates for the degree; additional conditions set by the departments or schools will be found in the announcements. Any department may make additional regulations consistent with these general rules.

Minimum Course Dissertation Requirements

After completing all course work required by their doctoral program, PhD students must register for a total of at least 30 semester credit hours of dissertation (excluding students in the clinical health psychology doctoral program) to complete the requirements for the PhD degree. In the School of Education and Human Development, this includes 12 hours of doctoral research labs. PhD students must register for a minimum of 5 hours (and a maximum of 10 hours) of dissertation credit in each fall and spring semester following successful completion of the comprehensive examination.

Once a student has completed 30 dissertation credits, they need to enroll for only one credit in each fall and spring semester until a successful defense of their dissertation. If defending in the summer semester, they must also register for one dissertation credit. Required registration for the defense may also be done through Candidate for Degree (CAND 5940) in the last semester.

Students who receive a stipend may have to continue to register for 5 credit hours to ensure their status as full-time students and ensure that retirement contributions are not withheld from their stipend. International students who register for only one credit in a semester, and who need to maintain their status on an F-1 or J-1 visa, may need to have their academic advisor complete a "Less Than Full-Time Enrollment" form.

A grade of In Progress (*IP*) will be assigned in all semesters until the final approved dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School office. The dissertation advisor determines the final dissertation grade, and then submits Change of Record forms to the Graduate School office to change all *IP* grades to this final grade.

Continuous Registration Requirements for Doctoral Candidates

A student (who is not on a leave of absence) who fails to register continuously in a given academic year (fall and spring semesters) for dissertation credit hours after passing the comprehensive examination may, at the discretion of the program director, be required to retake and pass the examination in order to regain status as a student in "good standing."

Students who are unable to register for the minimum dissertation credits because of extenuating personal circumstances should apply for a leave of absence as explained below.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

An approved leave of absence does not automatically extend the time limit for earning a degree, but may be cited as supporting documentation to request an extension if needed. Leaves of absence that exceed one year will not be approved unless the program director provides the dean with a compelling justification why such action should be approved. Students who are absent for longer than one year will be considered to have withdrawn from the program and will be required to reapply for admission and be considered with all other applicants.

OFF-CAMPUS STATUS FOR PHD STUDENTS

If, in the course of his/her dissertation research, a student plans to perform their dissertation work or study out-of-state and will not be utilizing campus facilities or faculty time, s/he may request off-campus status for purposes of registering for three units of thesis credit. Written requests must be received in the Graduate School office at least one week before the semester begins. The request must be co-signed by the program director prior to submission for approval to the Graduate School. Off-campus status cannot be extended to the (last) term in which the final examination is to be taken (during which the student must register for at least five hours of dissertation research), unless the student has already registered for 30 dissertation credits.

Doctoral Examinations

Each PhD program will require at least comprehensive and final examinations. Notice of all examinations must be filed with the dean of the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to administration.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

Each program is responsible for ensuring that students are qualified for doctoral study by successfully passing a preliminary examination. Graduate programs that require students to have a master's degree before they enter their PhD program may exempt the student from taking a preliminary exam. The preliminary exam must occur within three semesters of completing the required courses as defined by the particular graduate program. The content and format of the preliminary examination are determined by the individual graduate program. The results (Pass/Fail) of the preliminary examination must be reported to the Graduate School. A student who fails the examination is subject to immediate dismissal from the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the program and concurrence of the dean; however, the preliminary exam may be retaken at the program's discretion.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

After completing or registering for all required program course work, and concurrent with applying for admission to candidacy for the PhD, students must take a comprehensive examination in their respective discipline. This exam will test a student's mastery of a broad field of knowledge, not merely the formal course work that s/he has completed. The oral part of the comprehensive exam is open to all members of the graduate faculty. This examination must be completed no later than the end of the third year for full-time students (fourth year for

students enrolled in the PhD programs in applied mathematics and computer science and information systems). Individual programs may establish an earlier deadline.

The student's comprehensive examination committee and the examination schedule must be approved by the program director. The Request for Graduate Examination form must be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks before the exam. The examination committee consists of a minimum of three graduate faculty members; the chair of the committee must be a member of the degree-granting program. The student's dissertation advisor, if already identified, may *not* chair the examination committee. All members of the committee must be present for the examination, although a minority of members, but not the chairperson or the student, may participate by interactive video. If *one* faculty member cannot be present due to an *emergency*, the exam may proceed with the faculty who can attend, and the student will schedule a separate meeting with the absent faculty member at an alternate time. The student must receive votes from the majority of the examination committee for one of the following outcomes: Pass, Conditional Pass or Fail. The examination form must be signed by the committee and returned to the Graduate School office.

If a student receives a Conditional Pass, the examining committee will clearly define the requirements for the student to receive an unconditional passing grade, and these requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of the examination committee within four months. The committee chair is responsible for monitoring the conditions and reporting their outcome to the Graduate School. Failure to satisfy these conditions will result in failure of the examination.

A student who fails the comprehensive examination is subject to immediate dismissal from the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the program and concurrence of the dean; however, the preliminary exam may be retaken at the program's discretion. The retake will be in the form designated by the committee and must be completed within twelve months. The original examination form noting the failure is signed by the committee and returned to the Graduate School office. New examination forms will be generated when the examination is rescheduled. Students will be required to meet registration requirements and be registered during the term in which the repeated exam is taken.

FINAL EXAMINATION/DEFENSE

After the dissertation has been completed, a final examination on the dissertation and related topics is conducted in two parts, an oral presentation of the dissertation research that is open to the public, and a closed examination conducted by the examining committee.

The program director will approve the student's final examination/defense committee and the examination schedule. The Request for Graduate Examination and PhD Announcement forms must be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks before the exam. Announcements of the examination are also posted and sent by the programs to appropriate faculty members. The Graduate School office will send the final examination signature form to the program office to be placed in the student's file for use at the exam.

The dissertation defense committee consists of a minimum of four graduate faculty members. The chair of the committee must be a member of the degree-granting program. The student's

dissertation advisor may not chair the examination committee. The student must submit finalized draft copies of the thesis to the defense committee at least two weeks before the examination date; some programs may require an earlier deadline.

All members of the committee must be present for the examination although a minority of members, but not the chairperson or the student, may participate by interactive video. If *one* faculty member cannot be present due to an *emergency*, the exam may proceed with the faculty who can attend, and the student will schedule a separate meeting with the absent faculty member at an alternate time. The examination form must be signed by the committee and returned to the Graduate School office. The student must receive votes from a strict majority of the examination committee for one of the following outcomes: Pass, Conditional Pass or Fail.

If a student receives a Conditional Pass, the examining committee will clearly define the requirements for the student to receive an unconditional passing grade, and these requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of the examination committee within 60 days of the defense. Under extenuating circumstances, the graduate program director may petition the Graduate School for additional time. If a student fails the examination, s/he may not continue in the program.

Dissertation Requirements

A dissertation based upon original investigation and showing mature scholarship and critical judgment, as well as familiarity with the tools and methods of research, must be written on a subject approved by the student's dissertation advisor and the dissertation advisory committee. All research conducted for the PhD degree must meet all regulatory standards specified by federal, state and local agencies regarding ethical research, animal use, human subjects, HIPAA and environmental safety.

After selecting a dissertation advisor, the student, in collaboration with his/her dissertation advisor, will choose a dissertation advisory committee, subject to approval of the graduate program director. Although it is recommended that the dissertation advisory committee be the same as the dissertation examination committee, the two committees need not be identical. The dissertation advisory committee will serve an advisory function to the student and dissertation advisor, and will also monitor the student's progress toward completing the dissertation. The dissertation advisory committee will determine when the student has made sufficient progress to begin writing his/her dissertation. The dissertation advisory committee will meet at least once each year, but individual programs may require – and the Graduate School encourages – a greater frequency of meetings. Written records of the meetings and of the student's progress will be kept in the student's file in the graduate program office, and notice that a student is not in compliance with this rule will be sent by the program to the Graduate School office three weeks before the end of the fall academic term. Students who have not had a dissertation advisory committee meeting in the preceding 12 months will not be permitted to register for subsequent semesters. Once the student is in compliance with this rule, s/he will be permitted to register.

The student's dissertation must meet the formatting criteria outlined in the [UC Denver Electronic Thesis and Dissertation guidelines](#). The Graduate School performs format review and approval for all dissertations prior to electronic submission. The formally approved dissertation

must be submitted electronically, with the appropriate supporting documentation, within 60 days of the successful dissertation defense. Dissertation fees are paid upon submission online.

Time Limit

Doctoral students, whether enrolled full time or part time, must complete all degree requirements within eight years of matriculation. Students who fail to complete the degree in this eight-year period are subject to termination from the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the program director and concurrence of the Graduate School dean. For a student to continue beyond the time limit, the program director must petition the dean for an extension and include: 1) reasons why the program faculty believes the student should be allowed to continue in the program and 2) an anticipated timeline for completion of the degree. Approved leaves of absence do not automatically extend the time limits for earning a degree, but they may be used as a reason to request an extension if needed.

Graduate Faculty

The graduate programs at the Denver Campus Graduate School are delivered by faculty who are especially qualified by education and experience for graduate teaching and scholarship.

The university and college/school qualifications are published in the “Graduate Faculty” section of the [Graduate School Rules](#). These rules distinguish between regular faculty, who are typically full-time members of the CU Denver faculty, and special faculty who may not be full-time, but who have special skills that enhance a college/school’s graduate course offerings. Faculty who meet these qualifications are admitted to membership in the graduate faculty of CU Denver. These are the only faculty members permitted to teach graduate courses or to serve on thesis, dissertation or graduate student committees at either campus of CU Denver.

Research Opportunities

CU Denver is strongly committed to discovering new knowledge and novel creative expressions through the research and creative efforts of its faculty. Such activities not only advance knowledge and enhance the quality of life, but strengthen teaching by grounding instruction in scholarship and professional practice. These activities constitute an important component of CU Denver’s service to the community at large. Externally funded projects are a major priority at the Denver Campus.

Research projects, training and public service programs encompass both traditional and nontraditional fields of study, focusing on issues important at all levels—city, state, national and international. The benefits to the campus are substantial, since externally-funded activities:

- assist in sustaining scholarly discourse and creative work;
- enable faculty members to engage in the advancement of knowledge;
- provide the foundation for solving pressing practical problems of vital concern to society; and

- enhance the educational opportunities of students both at undergraduate and graduate levels.

In addition, a great deal of research at the university is conducted without substantial external support. This research also yields important insights that are conveyed to a national audience through faculty publications, presentations, exhibits, performances and professional activities. Many members of the faculty are leaders within the national scholarly community. All these pursuits bring recognition to the university, establish the credibility of its faculty and enhance the value of the degree it confers.

The active engagement of graduate students in these scholarly and creative activities is the centerpiece of a vibrant program in graduate education. The mentorship of graduate students by the graduate faculty is a major objective of the educational process. In addition, the consolidation of the Denver Campus with the Anschutz Medical Campus is opening new opportunities for collaborative, interdisciplinary work.