

ACADEMIC RULES

The general rules contained in the Undergraduate Academic Rules and Regulations (<https://coursecatalog.syracuse.edu/undergraduate/academic-rules/>) also apply to graduate students.

These rules and regulations are based on the requirements of the Graduate School. Departments, schools, and colleges may have additional rules that apply, that may be more restrictive. Academic rules and regulations for the College of Law may be found on their website.

Additional Sources for Information

There are a number of other sources for information and rules that are important for students. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

Syracuse University Policies (<https://policies.syr.edu/>)
 Financial Aid Home (<https://financialaid.syr.edu/>)
 Student Handbook (<https://experience.syracuse.edu/community-standards/about/student-handbook/>)
 Syracuse Abroad (<https://suabroad.syr.edu/>)
 Tuition and Fees and General Policies Booklet (<https://finance.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-2026-General-policies-booklet.pdf>)

Academic Record

19.0 Advanced Credit Examinations

Graduate students who wish to obtain credit toward advanced degrees for knowledge in a field essential to their programs of study but acquired by means that preclude formal transfer to Syracuse University may petition for an Advanced Credit examination in a course or courses covering the relevant area of study. The petition requesting an Advanced Credit examination must state the basis for the belief that the student has attained competence at the graduate level in the specified academic area and be accompanied by a statement from the student's department supporting the petition and accepting responsibility for preparing and administering the examination. The minimum passing grade for a graduate Advanced Credit Exam is B.

20.0 Transfer Credit

At the graduate level, schools/colleges and departments may assess and accept credit from an official transcript

- earned at another regionally accredited graduate school in the United States or at an institution equivalently recognized in another country;
- earned in a course in which the grade earned was at least a B. Coursework completed on a pass/fail basis is not eligible for transfer, unless approved by both the academic unit chair and the dean of the Graduate School; and
- that is an integral part of the degree program.

Transfer credit should be evaluated and posted no later than the end of the student's first semester. All coursework applied toward a degree must comply with all time limitations.

A maximum of 30 percent of credits counted toward a master's degree at Syracuse University may be transferred from another institution provided that the credits are an integral part of the degree program. Transfer credit can comprise no more than 50 percent of the doctoral coursework. This rule does not apply to dual degree programs and to degree programs that are offered jointly with another university.

A maximum of three credits from a combination of transfer and/or external examinations/extra-institutional and experiential learning may

be accepted toward C.A.S. programs, with program approval. School of Education C.A.S. programs that are 60 or more credits may have a maximum of 30 credits transferred. Other exceptions may be granted by petition to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Transfer School/College Rules

- College of Professional Studies
 - Students may transfer a maximum of nine credits into an M.P.S. program.
- David B. Falk College of Sport
 - Please refer to program specific rules found on the academic program pages within the course catalog. All Falk College graduate students who have transfer credit upon entering a graduate program in Falk, must file a petition to transfer credits no later than the end of the 1st semester. For programs without specific transfer credit rules listed on the academic program pages, the University rules and limits will apply. University rules and limits reflect the maximum transfer credits allowed, while program rules and limits may be less if listed.
- School of Information Studies
 - A minimum grade of B is required in any transferred course, and credits from courses transferred must have been earned within seven (7) years of when the student is going to graduate with their iSchool degree.
 If international students have a non-STEM visa coming into a STEM program at the School, or are transferring into a program with a higher or lower number of credits needed to graduate, the student must notify the Center for International Services so that the Center can report the facts of the student's present situation to US Immigration for potential visa adjustment.
 Students may petition to transfer a maximum of six credits towards their master's degree, from outside the iSchool or University.
 Students may transfer up to 6 credits to the M.S. program under articulation agreements with the following institutions. The agreements are available for review on the School of Information Studies website.
 - National Defense University.
 - University of Virginia School of Continuing and Professional Studies
 - Certificate in Cybersecurity Management.
 - US Army Signal Center School.
- Martin J. Whitman School of Management
 - Students may transfer a maximum of six credits of courses into their M.B.A. or M.S. program from another AACSB-accredited business school. Students must file a petition and receive approval prior to taking the course. Grades from these courses will not be transferred, nor will they count toward the GPA. A grade of B or better is required in the transfer course.
- S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
 - A maximum of 6 credits may be transferred to count toward any master's degree in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

20.1 Portfolio Review

Credit may be granted for studio work applicable toward professional degrees in the School of Architecture upon departmental evaluation of the portfolio.

21.0 Graduate Students Taking Undergraduate-Level Courses

Prior to registration, graduate students may petition to register for an undergraduate-level course, with the exception of PED courses, which do not require a petition. An undergraduate course taken by a graduate student appears on the graduate section of the transcript. The course counts toward overall credit and GPA calculations on the transcript, unless flagged to remove it from calculation. However, an undergraduate-level course does not fulfill graduate degree requirements.

22.0 Restricted Graduate Credit

Restricted graduate credit is credit earned at the graduate level by students who are not matriculated in a graduate program. Restricted credit must be converted to graduate credit in order to be included in a graduate degree or certificate program. All coursework taken as a non-matriculated student automatically calculates toward the graduate GPA unless a petition to flag the courses is submitted to and approved by the department chair of student's program after matriculation in a degree or certificate program.

23.0 Conversion to Graduate Credit

A student may apply to have up to 12 credits of restricted graduate credit converted to graduate credit if the student meets *all* of the following conditions:

- becomes matriculated in a graduate degree or certificate program
- overall average in all Syracuse University graduate work is at least 2.8
- earned a B or better in each course
- courses are part of a degree or certificate program approved by the student's department
- coursework has been completed within the time limit allowed for the degree

Note: these restrictions do not apply to formally registered undergraduate/graduate combined programs (4+1 programs).

Restricted graduate credit earned during the term in which the student became matriculated in the Graduate School is converted automatically to graduate credit.

Credit Conversion School/College Rules

- School of Education
 - In the higher education degree program, no more than six hours of restricted graduate credit may be converted to graduate credit. In all other graduate degree programs, no more than nine hours of restricted graduate credit may be converted to graduate credit.
- Martin J. Whitman School of Management
 - No more than six credits of restricted credit may be converted to graduate credit.

24.0 Retaking Courses

Unless other specific program requirements apply, Graduate students may only retake a course in which they earned a grade of C+, C, C- or F with approval from the department/college. Graduate courses may only be retaken once unless otherwise specified. A repeated course replaces the original course on the student's degree program of study, but both the original course and the repeated course will appear on the student's transcript and both courses will calculate, unless the original course is flagged.

25.0 Flagging Courses

A student may petition their department/college to flag the following:

- undergraduate or remedial courses that are not part of the student's graduate program, such as English as a Second Language
- courses taken while non-matriculated
- when officially changing degree programs, courses that do not apply to the student's new degree program under certain conditions
- when retaking a course in which the student earned a grade of C+, C, C- or F, with approval from their department/college. Graduate courses may be retaken only once. (Note that unless flagging is requested, both the original course and the retaken course will be included in calculations.)

26.0 Grades

P/F (Pass/Fail)

Graduate students may only receive pass/fail grades for courses designated as pass/fail. Students may elect a letter grade in a pass/fail class when permissible.

Academic Status

27.0 Minimum GPA to Continue Graduate Work

Graduate students must earn at least a 2.8 cumulative GPA in the first 30 credits of graduate study at Syracuse University. The academic unit may cancel matriculation if this requirement is not met.

28.0 Student Status

Full-time

A graduate student is considered full time under any one of the following conditions:

- registered for a semester, full-time study (9 credits for fall, spring, or summer in a program approved by the student's advisor)
- registered for a non-standard quarter-term, full-time study (6 credits for fall, winter, spring, or summer in a program approved by the student's advisor)
- holding an appointment as a graduate assistant or fellow and registered for the semester (fall and spring only)
- registered for fewer than 9 credits but for at least 0 (zero) credits of thesis, dissertation, or degree in progress for the semester and engaged, at a level equivalent to full-time study in one or more of the following activities as certified by your program.
 - a proposed plan of study for the semester should be agreed upon between the student and the instructor (signed by both and filed with the school or college)
 - studying for preliminary, qualifying, or comprehensive exams
 - studying for a language or tool requirement
 - actively working on a thesis or dissertation
 - an internship

Registration for 6 credits in a six-week summer session confers full-time status for the session.

If the student is not registered for any coursework, including registration for master's thesis or doctoral dissertation credits, the student must be registered for GRD 998 Degree in Progress.

A J.D. or S.J.D. law student is full-time if enrolled for 12 credits in a fall or spring semester. Students pursuing an L.L.M. degree are considered full-

time if enrolled for 9 credits in a fall or spring semester. If matriculated in a joint/dual degree program that includes the J.D. degree, then the law requirement for full-time status takes precedence over the 9-credit criterion for full-time status as stated above.

**The New York State Education Department, based on NYS Education Law and the Regulations of the Education Commissioner, define full-time study to be 12 credits per semester for educational requirements for state academic awards and loans.*

**The University's certification of a student's status is based solely on the criteria stated in this rule. Students who meet Syracuse University's requirements for full-time or part-time status may not meet requirements for such status as defined by other agencies or institutions. Conversely, students who do not meet Syracuse University's requirements for full-time or part-time status may be considered full-time or part-time by other agencies. Student status is not the criterion for determining tuition charges for a specific term. Please refer to (Tuition and Fees Booklet (<https://finance.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-2026-General-policies-booklet.pdf>)) for the specific academic year.*

Part-Time (Fall, Spring, and Summer)

Graduate students who do not meet the requirements for full-time status are considered part time for the semester.

Maximum Course Load (Fall, Spring/Winterlude)

The maximum course load for most graduate programs is 15 credits each fall and spring semester. Alternate limits may apply on a per program basis. Registration for additional credits requires a petition and approval of your academic department.

Winterlude is a part of the Spring semester and the maximum load of 15 credits includes both Spring and Winterlude classes. The maximum credit load for Winterlude is four credits. Winterlude classes are charged separately from the spring semester. Please refer to the Tuition and Fees Booklet (<https://finance.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-2026-General-policies-booklet.pdf>) for more information.

Maximum Course Load (Summer)

Graduate students may register for a maximum of 6 credits in a six-week session (with Maymester and Summer Session I considered as one session for this purpose), and a maximum of 12 credits in any summer. Registration for credits above the maximum set by your program requires a petition and approval of your academic department.

Academic Actions

29.0 Internal Transfer

Graduate students may change their degree program if the transfer is approved by the new program. Graduate students wishing to initiate any kind of change in degree program, whether transferring between programs or undertaking concurrent graduate degree programs, must consult their funding sources as to the effect the proposed change may have on their eligibility for continued funding. Internal transfer requests must be received before the financial drop deadline of the current term.

Degree and Certificate Programs

30.0 Graduate Degree and Certificate Programs

Master's degree candidates must take at least 70 percent of Syracuse University credit hours for the degree. See "Calculation of Credit Hours Toward Degree Requirements" for school/college-specific exceptions.

Doctoral students must take at least 50 percent of coursework, exclusive of dissertation, in courses offered through a Syracuse University registered graduate degree program. Experiential learning credit and professional experience courses do not count toward the residency requirement.

Syracuse University offers programs in either semester or quarter term calendars. Students may not be enrolled in programs offered on different program calendars (semester or quarter) at the same time. Such programs may only be pursued separately. Students wishing to pursue simultaneous degrees may choose to do so only in the calendar of their primary program.

31.0 Master's Degrees

Program of Study

A matriculated student who is studying for the master's degree must satisfactorily complete a program of study of not less than 30 credits that is approved by the academic unit and filed with the Graduate School.

Time to Degree

Students must meet all requirements for the master's degree within seven years from the time the student registers for the first course to be used in the master's degree program. If a student does not meet this requirement, the student may petition their school/college for reinstatement of credits that were completed outside the seven-year timeframe.

Comprehensive Examinations

The student's school/college will determine the nature of any comprehensive examination or examinations that apply toward their master's degree. Such exams may or may not be directly related to the content of particular courses that the student has taken.

Oral Thesis Defense Examination

An oral thesis defense examination committee consists of four voting members that include a chairperson, thesis or area of study advisor, and other specialists in the subject area. The school/college will conduct the examination in the manner it considers most effective; the student should contact their department and school/college for specific procedures and guidelines. The committee chair will preside over the exam and ensure that department/school/college and Graduate School regulations and declared policies are followed.

The student's oral examination committee will prepare a report that reflects one of the following statuses: pass; pass with minor revisions (generally editorial); pass with major revisions (substantive); not pass. You are entitled to an explanation from the committee concerning the results of the examination.

32.0 Doctoral Degrees

Requirements for the doctoral degree emphasize mastery of a field of knowledge facility in the use of methodologically sound research techniques, and responsibility for the advancement of knowledge. The degree is awarded in recognition of high attainments in the student's chosen field, as shown by the completion of specified courses and by the production of a dissertation demonstrating the ability to carry out independent investigation that advances knowledge in the field.

Program of Study

Each academic unit determines, consistent with its approved and registered curriculum, the number of coursework credits and the number of dissertation credits that will constitute the student's program of study, including that portion of the work for the master's

(if applicable) that will form an integral part of the doctoral program. Graduate coursework included in the program of study must be relevant to the student's area of study.

Qualifying Examinations

The qualifying exam format and timing will be set by the student's academic unit, and may be in oral or written form, or both. The student completing the qualifying exam must demonstrate acceptable competence in any required languages, research methodologies, and other core competencies as designated by the student's program. If the outcome of the qualifying examination is unsatisfactory, the student may be granted a second exam after an appropriate period of preparation as overseen by the student's program director and academic advisor.

All But Dissertation (ABD)

ABD status is earned when all requirements for the degree, except for the dissertation and the final oral dissertation defense exam, have been completed. The student's department/college must notify the Graduate School once ABD status has been reached and before the end of the term in which the status is effective.

Time to Degree

The maximum time for completion of a doctoral degree, as set and monitored by the Graduate School, is eight years from the term the student matriculated into the doctoral program. The eight-year time to degree requirement expectation represents the maximum number of years a graduate student can take to complete the degree. Doctoral programs can and should enforce shorter time to degree requirements as necessary and outlined in their respective departmental handbooks.

The eight-year time to completion expectation does not automatically stop and start again in situations where a student takes a leave of absence, nor does it extend solely based on part-time status. Credited time towards degree completion based on a leave of absence or part-time status will be granted only with approval of the program and the Graduate School Dean through a petition filed with the Graduate School.

Exceeding Time to Degree Requirements

If the student will exceed the eight-year limit for completing their degree, the student must, by the second semester of their eighth year, with the support of their department and advisor, submit a petition for an extension of study. Such a petition must provide evidence of academic progress on the dissertation and include a detailed plan for dissertation completion within one year.

Petitions to extend the eight-year time to degree requirement will not be approved for greater than one year at a time and additional extensions will only be granted if there are significant extenuating circumstances, with program and Graduate School approval.

For doctoral students admitted prior to the Fall of 2023 and who are already at or beyond their eighth year of study, academic programs are expected to engage with the student to determine whether the student can develop a realistic plan for dissertation completion. Students who provide a plan for dissertation completion that is agreed to by the department and the academic advisor will submit a petition (including the detailed completion plan) to the Graduate School Dean, seeking approval of a formalized timeline for completion of the degree. Petitions

for additional extensions will be considered by the program, with concurrence of the Graduate School, on a case-by-case basis.

Students beyond the eighth year of study who do not submit a plan to their department or whose plan does not meet the requirements as set forth above will be administratively withdrawn from their program.

Dissertation Advisor

A faculty member from the department or program will be identified as the student's dissertation advisor. The dissertation advisor should be a Syracuse University tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the program of study of student's dissertation. In exceptional cases, where faculty emeriti or others with outstanding qualifications in the student's area of research will direct the dissertation, a member of the Syracuse University faculty from the department/college must jointly oversee the preparation of the student's dissertation. If a student's dissertation advisor has left the University, the faculty member, with departmental consent, can remain the advisor of record for up to one year.

Oral Dissertation Defense Examination

Eligibility to schedule dissertation defense. Prior to the dissertation defense, the Graduate School must verify that the student has been admitted to candidacy, and that all supporting documentation has been filed. The doctoral candidate confers with their dissertation advisor to identify appropriate committee members. Once committee members are identified, and with academic unit and Graduate School approval, an oral defense examination may be scheduled.

Minimum size of oral examination committee. At a minimum, the dissertation defense committee consists of four faculty members, including the oral defense chair and the student's dissertation advisor.

At the request of the student and with concurrence of the student's faculty adviser, an oral examination committee can include more than the required minimum number of committee members. In addition, a doctoral program may elect to require additional oral examination committee members above the minimum for all dissertation defenses.

Dissertation defense committee membership. All committee members must have at least a PhD or comparable doctorate. Within the minimum committee size of four, the student's dissertation advisor is counted as one of the committee members, as is the oral exam chair. The remaining two committee members must be tenure track or tenured faculty members employed by Syracuse University with relevant expertise, and will typically be from the student's program and/or affiliated program faculty.

If additional committee members beyond the required four members are desired and/or required by the program, additions can include: Syracuse University non-tenure track faculty member with a PhD or comparable doctorate (e.g., teaching assistant professor) and/or an individual who is external to the University, assuming the individual has appropriate subject matter expertise.

Oral exam chair. The oral exam chair must be a Syracuse University tenured or tenure track faculty member from outside of the student's program of enrollment. The chair will preside over the exam and ensure that the regulations and declared policies of the Graduate School and academic unit are followed. The oral exam chair has several responsibilities:

- Ensure that the student is treated fairly and equitably in accordance with University, College, and Departmental guidelines and policies

- Confirm that decisions made by the committee reflect the collective judgment of the committee
- Confirm the rigor, fairness, and integrity of defense process
- Communicate with Graduate School if irregularities arise that cannot be resolved internally and work with the Dean of the Graduate School to find a resolution
- Communicate the outcome of the defense meeting to the Dean of the Graduate School

Public announcement of dissertation defense examination. The oral exam time and place are publicly announced by the Graduate School; graduate students and faculty may be encouraged to attend and participate in the meeting based on departmental preference. Non committee members in attendance are to be excused from the meeting during the committee's executive session where the exam outcome is deliberated.

Dissertation defense format. At a minimum, a defense should include a brief oral presentation from the doctoral candidate followed by a rigorous questions and answer session where a student is provided the opportunity to demonstrate subject matter mastery. Beyond these minimum requirements, each program is free to conduct the dissertation defense in a manner considered to be most effective based on norms within a given academic discipline.

Committee members absence or changes. Under exceptional circumstances, one committee member may be absent from the oral defense. That absent committee member must submit questions and/or comments in writing to the chair in advance and the oral defense chair must note this in their written report. If more than one committee member is unable to attend the meeting, the meeting must be rescheduled. The Graduate School must be informed of any committee substitutions after the exam has been scheduled, or if more than one committee member will be absent.

Voting and determination of exam outcome. At the conclusion of the dissertation defense, dissertation committee members meet in executive session to deliberate and vote on the outcome of the exam. To pass the exam, a majority of the committee must vote favorably. For example, for a committee consisting of four members, three out of the four members must vote to pass the student. The student is entitled to an explanation from the committee concerning the outcome of the defense.

- The committee's report will recommend one of the following outcomes:
 - pass
 - pass with minor revisions (generally editorial)
 - pass with major revisions (substantive)
 - not pass

During the executive session, the dissertation defense committee determines whether required revisions are to be reviewed and approved by the entire committee or overseen only by the dissertation advisor. Particularly in cases where only minor revisions are required, the advisor is typically left with sole responsibility for approving the changes before the final document is filed with the Graduate School.

33.0 Certificate Programs

Certificates of Advanced Study (C.A.S.) (*excluding programs registered as preparing individuals for a teaching certificate, educational leadership certificate, or a professional license issue by the State Education Department*): A matriculated student who is studying for a C.A.S. must satisfactorily complete a program of study of not less than 12 credits

that is approved by the academic unit and filed with the Graduate Degree Certification Office. C.A.S. programs are stand alone programs.

Eligibility requirement: To be awarded a C.A.S., a student must be matriculated in the certificate program for at least one semester. Students enrolled and matriculated in only a C.A.S. program, must register for one or more courses, required by the certificate-granting program, as a matriculated C.A.S student. Matriculation may not be backdated.

34.0 Counting Credits Toward Multiple Degrees and/or Programs

When a student is counting credits towards multiple degrees and/or programs, in the same or closely related field(s) and the coursework makes up an integral part of the degrees and/or programs, the following restrictions apply:

The student must be admitted to the degree program in each of the awarding department/college.

In no instance shall course credit be counted more than twice in satisfaction of the requirements for multiple degrees and/or programs.

In order to earn two or more degrees and/or programs (including Certificates of Advanced Study (C.A.S), you must earn a minimum of 80 percent of the combined total of SU credits normally required for each of the degrees. Meaning, only up to 20% of the credit hours for the two degrees may be double counted. However, in cases where the C.A.S. curriculum can be completed within another degree program, credit from the C.A.S. may be counted in its entirety for the C.A.S. and other degree. Similarly, if the Master's curriculum is in the same field as the doctoral degree, the credits for the Master's degree may be counted in their entirety towards the doctoral degree.

Exceptions

Two 12-credit C.A.S may not be awarded for less than 21 credits (i.e., only one three credit course can be shared between the two C.A.S.).

Two 30-credit Master's degrees will not be awarded for fewer than 51 credits (i.e., up to nine credits can be shared between the two Master's degrees).

Three 30-credit Master's degrees will not be awarded for fewer than 75 credits.

Note: These restrictions do not apply to joint/dual programs with the College of Law or the Master of Philosophy degrees.

35.0 Diplomas and Certificates

Reference general academic rule section Diplomas and Certificates.

Graduate diplomas:

- display the degree title;
- list major, except when already included in the degree title, e.g., Master of Social Work; and
- are signed by the Chancellor, and the Dean(s) of the student's school(s)/college(s).

Certificates of Advanced Study:

- display the certificate title (i.e., Certificate of Advanced Study);
- list the area of study; and

- are signed by the Chancellor, and the Dean(s) of the school(s)/ college(s) that award the C.A.S.