Steps to Degree Completion
MS/MA/MFA Degrees
Application to Candidacy

This is the department’s confirmation that the student has completed all courses towards the master’s degree, or is currently enrolled in the final course(s) towards the master’s degree.

What is left to complete?

- **Defense & Thesis** (for Plan I & III students)
  
  or

- **Comp Exam** (for Plan II students)
Timing: Advancement/Graduation

The vast majority of academic master’s students advance & graduate in the same quarter. Degree completion paperwork is a two-step process:

1. **Advance:** Application to Candidacy/APPC due 3rd Friday of the quarter
2. **Graduate:** Final Report Form/FRF due last day of the quarter

Plan I (defense/thesis students) sometimes take more time in between advancement and graduation to work on their thesis.

- No time limits for master’s degree completion
- Graduating student who advanced >5 years ago & hasn’t been enrolled since? Please consult with a Graduate Academic Affairs Advisor, as an additional step may be required.
The APPC deadline
and many other important dates and deadlines
are found on the Registrar’s Calendar here:
https://blink.ucsd.edu/instructors/courses/enrollment/calendars/2022.html

Mark your calendar! The 3rd Friday of each quarter.

But please submit your APPC’s earlier, if you can!
Missed the APPC deadline?

You can submit a late APPC

A late APPC is one that was received AFTER the 3rd Friday deadline. Received is defined as signed by the dept chair/designee in DocuSign.

Write the reason why the APPC is late, in the Dept Notes section of the APPC cover sheet.

NOTE:

Students must be enrolled in the quarter in which they advance. When you are submitting a retro APPC, you will have to “backdate” the advancement quarter to that final quarter of enrollment.
Why do we do review the student’s degree audit at the beginning of their final quarter?

We want to identify problems that may impact the student’s eligibility to graduate, early on, so that they can potentially be resolved in time for them to graduate in the quarter that they intended.
How do I identify which students in my department need to advance &/or graduate this quarter?

The process to identify these students varies by department and may include:

- Current enrollment into a final/capstone course
- A report to find students who will have completed $X$ number of units at the conclusion of the quarter
- Department email/survey to determine students’ advancement/graduation plans
- Department email notification of advancement/graduation deadline (ie. student self-identification)

Consider consulting with other graduate coordinators to find out what works best for them!
PHD who wants a master’s degree along the way or to terminate with a master’s degree

Due to current Duplicate Degree Policy: When submitting a master’s degree APPC for a PHD, always check to see if the student has already earned a previous academic master’s degree.

Does the student have a previous MS or MA degree?

**NO** - Proceed with the APPC submission

**YES** - The previous advanced degree was not from UCSD and was in a fundamentally different discipline:
Submit an email (with the APPC) from the dept chair or other member of faculty leadership, Confirming approval of the duplicate degree.

The email should state that: The faculty have reviewed the student’s record and have determined that the second Master’s degree is in a fundamentally different disciplinary field. The student’s coursework and/or research represents a different type of training than the training received at UCSD and that the faculty approve conferring a duplicate master’s degree.

**YES** - The previous duplicate degree was awarded by UCSD or it was in the same discipline as the degree that the student is currently pursuing:
If you wish to pursue a request for an exception to the duplicate degree policy: Submit an exception letter (with the APPC) for review by the Sr. Assoc Dean.
The email should explain:
- How the previous degree/coursework/research was different from the degree/coursework/research that the student is currently pursuing.
- How the duplicate master’s degree will benefit the student in their career.

Senate policy: [https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/70346/GC-Revision-to-the-Policy-on-the-Duplication-of-Advanced-Degrees.pdf](https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/70346/GC-Revision-to-the-Policy-on-the-Duplication-of-Advanced-Degrees.pdf)
Run uAchieve Degree Audits

Run in PDF format only – not HTML
An HTML version of the degree audit will be returned/declined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Code</th>
<th>GRADEC93MS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admission Term</td>
<td>WI2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC93 - MACHINE LEARNING AND DATA SCIENCE (MS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**OK**

- **UC GPA**: 3.720 GPA
- Total Units Completed: 33.00 Units Earned
- UC Graded Units: 20.00 Units Earned

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**Total UC Units Completed**

- **Earned**: 33.00 Units
- 20.00 UC Graded Units
- 13.00 Units Earned

**Included S-grade units**: 13.00 Units

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**48 Unit Departmental Total**

- **Earned**: 44.00 Units
- 20.00 UC Graded Units
- 74.400 POINTS
- 3.720 GPA

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**Final Degree Audit On Hold**

This is not an official transcript. Federal law prohibits transmission to a third party without consent of the student.
Carefully review each degree audit before attaching to the APPC cover sheet/submitting:

- Only submit a uAchieve audit with OK &/or IP on the left-hand side of the page.
  - OK indicates that courses used towards that area/section of the degree audit have been successfully completed.
  - IP indicates that one or more courses in that area will satisfy requirements once the course is successfully completed (ie there is a course that is currently a Work In Progress / WIP).
- This red text circled at the top of this uAchieve audit simply means that there is an ungraded (ie WIP) course on the audit: *FINAL DEGREE AUDIT ON HOLD** It is ok to submit.
- The red text mentioned above will change to this green text once all grades are submitted: **FINAL DEGREE AUDIT**

NOTE: Refer to the bottom of this audit to see what a properly processed course substitution (“ADD ECE271A”) looks like, as well as a properly processed undergraduate waiver (for ECE 225A)
The degree audit looks great!

But Wait......

Let’s say the degree audit displays only OK & IP. There are no NO’s printed on it. Do you still have to check all of the courses and grades on the uAchieve audit before submitting?

YES.

There are several reasons why the degree audit might show that the student has successfully completed all their requirements....when that isn’t the case.

- A coding error behind the scenes that will erroneously allow a course to satisfy a requirement
- A recent change in the program’s curriculum that hasn’t been updated on the audit yet
- A uAchieve exception that was processed incorrectly, or in error
- Dept requires letter grades, but student is currently enrolled in a course under an S/U grade option:

  Note: In this case, once the “S” grade comes in (and the audit is run again), the course will not be allowed to satisfy the requirement (ie it will be “kicked out” of the degree audit). Until then... the audit will think this WIP course is OK to satisfy the letter-graded requirement.
OPPOSITE SITUATION: The degree audit says that the student has NOT successfully completed their program - but you know that they have!

2 common reasons why this would happen:

1.) The student is using a course towards their program that is not normally acceptable/listed in the curriculum.

Assuming the dept has approved the student to use this course, a manual course substitution must be processed (aka a uAchieve exception). This will force that course into the correct spot on the degree audit.

To receive training in How to Process uAchieve Exceptions, please contact Ken Keziah in the Registrar’s Office: kkeziah@ucsd.edu

2.) The degree audit is not working correctly, or it has not been programmed to reflect recent updates in curriculum.

Short-term solution (to enable APPC submission) may involve processing an exception in order to place courses where they belong.

However, the issue needs to be resolved permanently, for all students. This will require a ticket to uAchieve encoders. Send email to uachieve@ucsd.edu or contact GEPA.
Additional potential reasons for a **NO** on a degree audit:

- GPA below 3.0
- Failed course
- Not enough units completed/courses taken
- Completed a course with an “S” grade, but program requires letter graded courses
- Enrolled in a course that was NOT included in the approved curriculum for that program (i.e., took the wrong course)

Do not submit a uAchieve audit/APPC when there is red **NO***, or this text appears at the top:

“At Least one requirement has not been satisfied”.

*Exception: APPC can be submitted with a red **NO** only if it relates to a low GPA. In that event, we will hold onto the APPC and process it, if the GPA increases to 3.0+ at the end of the quarter.
Submit the APPC

- Access via Collab
- Fill out routing info
- Fill out cover sheet
- Adjust subject line which must include:
  - Student’s name
  - PID
  - Major Code
  - The Words, “APPC” or “Application to Candidacy” (which auto fills)
- Attach PDF
- Submit the Form

NOTE: the form will not route to GEPA until the final dept signature is on the form.

[DocuSign eSignature interface with recipients listed and sign-off notes]
Signatures

- All signatures on the APPC are obtained via DocuSign
- Departments can opt to require/not require the student’s faculty advisor to sign the form
- Departments can opt to have a designated person (usually the graduate coordinator) sign the APPC, in lieu of the Department Chair.
- The department is responsible for monitoring the faculty/staff authorized to sign the APPC’s. The Graduate Division does not track who is authorized to sign in every department.
- Once the final department signature is obtained, the APPC will be routed to the Grad Division.
- The APPC is considered “received” by the Grad Division, on the date that the final departmental signature is obtained.
Has the APPC/Advancement been processed for my student yet?

Check the Academic Events section of the Graduate Student Database.

- Masters Advance Date: 04/09/21
  - This date indicates that the Grad Division approved the advancement.

- 4/9/2021: MSTR’S ADVANCED TO CANDIDACY
  - This date indicates that the Registrar’s Office has completed final processing of the advancement.
Graduation Timeline:

Plan II / Comp Exam

NOTE: This is a typical timeline. It may vary by department. For example, some departments have their students take the comp exam prior to their last quarter of enrollment (aka prior to advancing to candidacy)

1. Student enrolls in final quarter/courses
2. Dept submits APPC by 3rd Friday of the quarter in which student is enrolled in their final course(s) to be used towards their program
3. Student completes Comprehensive Exam
4. Dept submits Final Report Form by last day of student’s graduation quarter
Plan II
Final Report Form

Accessed via Collab

Select the correct form:

- Master's (MA/MS) Final Report - Plan I Thesis
- Master's (MA/MS) Final Report - Plan II Exam
- Master's (MFA) Final Report
- MPH Final Report (MPH only)
- MIA Final Report Cover Sheet
- Professional Degree Final Report Cover Sheet
- Doctoral Final Report
- EdD (Doctor of Education) Final Report

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The comp exam date must always be on or before the date of Dept Chair/Designee’s signature.

Faculty Advisor signature is optional. Depts can opt to leave this blank, or route to the student’s faculty advisor for a signature.

Dept Chair signature is required. However, depts can opt to assign a designee to sign for them. Most often, the designee is the Grad Coord.

If student is NOT enrolled in their graduation quarter, check the filing fee box. If this is the case AND they were also not enrolled in the quarter BEFORE their graduation quarter, then also click the “Readmit” box.

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Approved:
06/17/2022

Department Chair/Program Director/Dean/Other:
Graduation Timeline
Plan I / Defense & Thesis

Plan I / Defense & Thesis:
1. Student enrolls in final quarter/courses
2. Dept submits APPC in first 3 weeks of the quarter in which they are enrolled in their final course(s)
3. Student/Dept submits the committee for approval at least 2 weeks prior to their defense AND before the student’s Preliminary Thesis Review with GAA
4. Student works with committee to schedule defense
5. Student meets with GAA for review of Thesis & discussion of deadlines surrounding paperwork
6. Dept submits the Final Report Form via DocuSign a day or two prior to the scheduled defense
7. Student defends
8. Student ensures all graduation-related documents have been submitted by the deadline
9. GAA performs the Final Document Review & notifies student of thesis/paperwork status
10. GAA processes degree in the weeks after grades close
Plan I:
Defense & Thesis

Final Report Form

These must all say "yes" -- or the form will be declined.

Check with student to make sure you have the most up to date version of their Thesis title.

See Plan II FRF:
Same rules apply with regards to exam (ie, defense) date, optional faculty advisor signature & Assessed Fees checkboxes.

Different from Plan II FRF: Dept Chair (or other authorized faculty member) must sign. Grad Coord cannot sign/be a designee for Plan I FRF's

Thesis submission fee must always be checked for a Plan I student, as this fee applies to all
Questions?

Please contact the Graduate Academic Affairs Advisor assigned to your department:

Kelsey Darvin (BIO, ECE, SE, SIO)

Karen Villavicencio (BENG, CENG, NENG, CSE)

Kim McCusker (all others)