Graduate Degree Requirements and Policies

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University graduate degree requirements

After being admitted to the program of one's choice, candidates for a graduate degree must:

1. Complete any preliminary course work and deficiencies.
2. Complete all courses and other program requirements, including residence requirements prescribed for the degree desired in the respective school or college within a seven-year period from the date of initial enrollment, with the exception of students enrolled in the Student Affairs Administration and Leadership Ed.D. (SAA Ed.D.) graduate program. SAA Ed.D. students must complete all degree requirements within ten years from the time of initial enrollment in the graduate program.
3. Earn a minimum of 30 credits for a master's degree; 54 credits for a doctorate or post-master's degree. Earn at least one-half of the minimum number of credits required in the program in graduate-only level courses (700, 800, 900, and non-slash 600 level courses). Some UWL graduate programs require more than 30 graduate credits. Please review the individual program requirements (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/programrequirements/) listed in the catalog for the exact number of credits required.
4. Earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00.
5. Satisfy dissertation, thesis, seminar paper, terminal/graduate projects and internships, or comprehensive examination, where applicable. A dissertation or thesis approved by the committee must be submitted to Graduate & Extended Learning for editorial review and approval by the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. The recommended initial submission date for review is two weeks before commencement. Ordinarily, a seminar paper or project report does not have to be approved by the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. However, if the seminar paper or project report is to be archived in Murphy Library, the student must follow the same rules as they apply to the dissertation/thesis requiring approval from the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. For further research/dissertation/thesis guidelines (https://www.uwlax.edu/gel/graduate-education/thesis-and-dissertation/), see Graduate & Extended Learning.
6. File a completed "Intent to Graduate" form online via the WINGS Student Center immediately following registration for the final semester or summer term in residence. December graduates and winter intersession should file by May 1. May and summer graduates should file by December 1.
7. Pay the graduation fee and remove all other indebtedness to the university. Payment of graduation fees does not imply readiness for graduation and does not take the place of applying for graduation.
8. Complete all requirements within 30 days after the official ending date of a term in order for a degree to be awarded for that term. (See #5 above for separate deadline for written capstone experience.)

Second master's degree policy

A graduate of a UWL master's degree program may earn a second UWL master's degree by meeting the following conditions:

1. Submit a new application for admission with the application fee.
2. Become accepted into the degree program by the appropriate college and program.
3. Complete program requirements. A maximum of nine semester credits of course requirements of the second UWL master's degree may be fulfilled by course work completed for a previous UWL master's degree. Individual programs may have a more restrictive policy on transferring credits from a previously earned master's degree. Program directors and deans approve credits that apply from program to program.
4. All general requirements for the master's degree apply to the second master's degree. Students must complete the terminal project for the second master's degree required by the program. All requirements must be completed within seven years, including credits accepted from a previous master's degree.

Students who received a master's degree from another institution must also meet the above requirements. The graduate transfer policy (https://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/academicpolicies/creditforpriorlearning/) will be used to determine credit to be awarded for previous course work from another institution.

Posthumous and Extraordinary Degrees

The awarding of a degree is the pinnacle of the college experience. It is an honor bestowed upon those that satisfactorily complete a course of study. Occasionally events take place where the need to consider additional degree options arise.

The goal of these policies is to honor those who have provided exemplary service to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and/or to extend sympathy and compassion to the families and friends of deceased students. Below is a means of addressing different circumstances surrounding the awarding of Posthumous, Extraordinary, and Honorary Degrees and the procedure associated with each degree.

See the Posthumous and Extraordinary Degrees Policy (https://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/degreerequirements/Posthumous_Extraordinary_Degrees_Policy_Fall_2025.pdf) for the full policy and criteria for awarding a special degree. Contact the Records and Registration Office at records@uwlax.edu for details on how to nominate an individual for consideration.