



## Department of Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES

[HTTP://CEHS.UNL.EDU/TMFD](http://cehs.unl.edu/tmfd)

## Master's Handbook

Updated Spring 2018

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
I. Admission .....	4
Degree Options .....	4
Graduate Status .....	5
Full Graduate Standing .....	5
Provisional Standing .....	6
Unclassified Status .....	6
Auditing Courses .....	6
II. Degree Requirements .....	6
Residential programs .....	7
Option I. Master of Science .....	7
Option I. Master of Arts .....	7
Option II. Master of Arts .....	7
Option III. Master of Science or Master of Arts .....	8
Distance Delivery Programs .....	8
Option I, II or III. Master of Arts in Material Culture and Textile Studies (Distance Delivery) .....	8
Option I or III. Master of Science in Merchandising (Distance Delivery) .....	9
Minor in Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design .....	9
III. Academic Standards and Guidelines .....	10
Registration Guidelines .....	10
Minimum Grade Requirements .....	10
Grading Breakdown .....	10
Incomplete Grades .....	11
Incomplete Grades for Research, Thesis, or Dissertation Hours .....	11
Annual Evaluation of Academic Progress .....	11
Probation and Termination .....	11
Length of Program .....	12
Student Code of Conduct .....	12

IV.	Advisor and Supervisory Committee .....	12
	Advisor.....	12
	Supervisory Committee .....	13
V.	Completion of Required Coursework .....	13
	Memorandum of Courses .....	13
	Memorandum of Courses Review.....	14
	Research Credits Form.....	14
VI.	Completion of Options.....	14
	Option I: Thesis Option.....	14
	IRB.....	14
	Format of Thesis.....	15
	Thesis Proposal.....	15
	Thesis Proposal Review by the Supervisory Committee.....	15
	Proposal Meeting for Thesis .....	15
	Final Oral Examination for Thesis.....	15
	Thesis Review by the Office of Graduate Studies .....	16
	Copies of Thesis.....	16
	Option II: Project-Based Option .....	16
	Project Proposal Review by the Supervisory Committee.....	16
	Proposal Meeting for Project .....	17
	Final Oral Examination for Project.....	17
	Project Review by the Office of Graduate Studies .....	17
	Copies of Project.....	17
	Option III: Course-Based Option .....	17
	Written Comprehensive Examination.....	18
	Final Oral Examination for Internship Project .....	19
VII.	Assistantships .....	19
	Assistantship Funding.....	19
	Tuition Waivers for Assistants .....	20
	Registration Guidelines for Assistants .....	20

Assistantship Tasks and Expectations.....20

Termination of Assistantships and Fellowships .....21

    Resigned or Terminated Assistant: Tuition Payment Responsibilities.....21

Appendix A: Master’s Degree Milestones ..... 22

## Introduction

The Department of Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design (TMFD) welcomes and congratulates you on your decision to pursue studies in the graduate program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It is the department's goal that your experiences in the graduate program meet your educational and professional goals. Much of this depends on you—The more you put into your graduate work, the more you will gain and the stronger your preparation for your professional career will be.

At the University of Nebraska, graduate programs are administered by the Office of Graduate Studies through the Dean of Graduate Education, Graduate Council, and University Graduate Faculty. Within the Department of Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design, the TMFD Graduate Faculty establishes policies and procedures to implement its graduate program. This handbook refers to the graduate programs in Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design and supplements the Office of Graduate Studies website. Statements made in this handbook do not replace any information found on the Office of Graduate Studies website.

## I. Admission

All applicants are required to upload the following information to the UNL Graduate Admissions Management and Evaluation System (GAMES) deployed by MYRED:

- A letter of application to TMFD's Graduate Committee Chair describing academic, research, and professional goals
- Resume
- Transcripts from all previous institutions
- Contact information for three individuals whom will provide letters of recommendation
- Required exam scores: GRE, TOEFL or IELTS
- Digital portfolio for Apparel Design applicants

The TMFD Graduate Committee considers the qualifications of applicants for admission to graduate study in Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design leading to a Master of Science or Master of Arts degree and makes recommendations to the Office of Graduate Studies. Deficiencies, assessed on an individual basis, may be removed concurrently with permission of the Office of Graduate Studies. Generally, no more than six graduate credit hours are transferable to the University of Nebraska from another institution.

### DEGREE OPTIONS

Applicants should clearly indicate their intended area of study, selected from the following areas of specialization:

- Apparel Design
  - Residential: MA Option II
- Material Culture and Textile Studies
  - Residential: MA Option I, II, or III
  - Distance Delivery: MA Option I, II, or III
- Merchandising
  - Residential: MS Option I or III
  - Distance Delivery: MS Option I or III
- Textile Science
  - Residential: MS Option I or III

## GRADUATE STATUS

### Full Graduate Standing

Students may qualify for Full Graduate Standing by presenting a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and by completing a minimum of 12 hours of undergraduate course work beyond the freshman (100) level in Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design or the equivalent from a related area. In addition, students should have a minimum undergraduate G.P.A. of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale and minimum scores on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) as follows:

- Verbal: 150
- Quantitative: 141
- Analytical Writing: 4.0

Textile Science applicants must have the following minimum scores on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE):

- Verbal: 143
- Quantitative: 155
- Analytical Writing: 4.0

Students from non-English-speaking countries who do not hold a bachelor degree awarded by an accredited U.S. institution are expected to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) prior to admission. TOEFL or IELTS scores must meet the minimum requirements for consideration for admission:

- Paper TOEFL test: 550
- Internet-based TOEFL test: 79
- International Language Test System (IELTS): 6

### Provisional Standing

Provisional admission is granted to applicants who have been accepted into a program, but have entrance deficiencies. When the entrance deficiencies have been successfully completed, the student must request a change of status to full standing by petitioning the TMFD Graduate Committee Chair. This request must be approved by the TMFD Graduate Committee and the Office of Graduate Studies at least one year before the application for graduation is submitted. Students admitted on provisional standing are not eligible to receive an assistantship until the removal of the provisional status.

### Unclassified Status

Unclassified admission is available for graduate students whose objectives are other than seeking a graduate degree. Should an unclassified status graduate student seek a change of status they should petition the TMFD Graduate Committee Chair. Unclassified students wishing to enter the TMFD graduate program are expected to complete the full application to the TMFD department and to fulfill all the requirements.

Unclassified status may be granted to applicants who could be accepted into the program after completing specific requirements established by the TMFD Graduate Committee, such as 12 hours of courses with a 3.00 G.P.A. If applicants satisfy the requirements, they may apply for admission again, although admission is not guaranteed.

### Auditing Courses

Students are permitted to audit courses that are not part of the outlined Memorandum of Courses determined by the TMFD Major Advisor and committee. Those who audit courses will meet the expectations stipulated by the instructor of the audited course.

## II. Degree Requirements

Access the Office of Graduate Studies website to obtain the following information:

- Approved graduate courses (found in the Graduate Studies Bulletin)
- Program requirements
- Thesis guidelines and deadlines
- Required forms for committee appointments, Memorandum of Courses, and graduation application

## RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

### Option I. Master of Science

Option I. Master of Science programs (33 hours) should be chosen by students preparing for scientific careers in business, research, industry or academia. The required number of hours for an Option I MS degree is 33 hours of 800 or 900 level courses, including six thesis hours. Included are 10-12 hours of approved graduate courses. Independent Study or Advanced Problems, if taken, must be in addition to these 10-12 hours. In addition to thesis credits, eight credit hours must be earned in coursework open exclusively to graduate students. Distribution of courses for Option I include:

12	hours minimum in TMFD, including TMFD 874
6	hours of thesis (TMFD 899)
3	hours of research methods
6	hours minimum of statistics
6	hours to be arranged with TMFD Major Advisor (may be in major area, outside area, or combination)
<hr/>	
33	hours total (8 hours in graduate-only courses, in addition to 6 thesis hours)

### Option I. Master of Arts

Option I. Master of Arts programs (30 hours) should be chosen by students preparing for professional careers in textiles and apparel, which could include studio practice, museum curation, research, or academics. The Master of Arts Option I degree requires 30 hours of 800 or 900 level courses, including six thesis hours. Included are 10-12 hours of approved graduate courses. Independent Study or Advanced Problems, if taken, must be in addition to these 10-12 hours. In addition to thesis credit, eight credit hours must be earned in coursework open exclusively to graduate students. Distribution of courses for Option I include:

12	hours minimum in TMFD, including TMFD 874
6	hours of thesis (TMFD 899)
6	hours of research methods
6	hours to be arranged with TMFD Major Advisor (may be in major area, outside area, or combination)
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30	hours total (8 hours in graduate-only courses, in addition to 6 thesis hours)

### Option II. Master of Arts

Option II. Master of Arts programs (36 hours) must complete at least 18 of the 36 required hours in approved graduate-level TMFD courses. No more than six of the 18 TMFD hours can be earned in Independent Study. Twelve of the 36 hours must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students. Distribution of courses for Option II include:

15	hours minimum in TMFD, including TMFD 874 and TMFD 873
6	hours for approved Option II project (TMFD 996)

6	hours of research methods
9	hours of course work in the minor area (outside of TMFD; approved by committee)
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36	hours total (12 hours in graduate-only courses)

**Option III. Master of Science or Master of Arts**

Option III. Master of Science or Master of Arts (36 hours) must complete at least 20 hours in TMFD courses. Eighteen of the 36 hours must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students. A formal presentation and comprehensive examination are required. Distribution of courses for Option III includes:

18	hours minimum in TMFD, including TMFD 874
6	hours of research methods
12	hours to be arranged with TMFD Major Advisor (may be in major area, outside area, or combination)
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36	hours total (18 hours in graduate-only courses)

**DISTANCE DELIVERY PROGRAMS**

**Option I, II or III. Master of Arts in Material Culture and Textile Studies (Distance Delivery)**

Option I. Master of Arts in Material Culture and Textile Studies (30 hours; Distance Delivery) requires 30 hours of 800 or 900 level courses, including six thesis hours. Included are 10-12 hours of approved graduate courses. Independent Study or Advanced Problems, if taken, must be in addition to these 10-12 hours. In addition to thesis credit, eight credit hours must be earned in coursework open exclusively to graduate students.

Option II and III. Master of Arts in Material Culture and Textile Studies (36 hours; Distance Delivery) requires completion of at least 20 hours in TMFD courses. Eighteen of the 36 hours must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students.

Distribution of courses for Option I, II and III Distance Delivery includes:

15	hours minimum in TMFD, including TMFD 808, 809, 814, 815, 818
6	hours of research methods, including TMFD 876 and other approved course in research methodology
3-9	hours of internship (TMFD 997); Option I will take fewer internship credit hours
6	hours to be arranged with TMFD Major Advisor (Option I: Thesis Hours (TMFD 899); Option II: Project Hours (TMFD 996); Option III (Additional coursework approved by supervisor))
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30-36	hours total (Option I – 30 hours; Option II or III-36 hours)

Internships (3-9 credits; TMFD 997) are supervised, independent, and professional experiences under the direction of a practicing professional. Students may intern at a

museum, historical society, living history site, private business, or non-profit arts or cultural organization near his/her place of residence. Students are to complete the following:

- 160 contact hours for each 3 hours of credit
- Read selected articles/books and write a summary of each assigned article/book
- Maintain a daily journal
- Produce a final presentation based upon the internship experience via video conferencing or in-person

### **Option I or III. Master of Science in Merchandising (Distance Delivery)**

Option I or III. Master of Science in Merchandising (36 hours; Distance Delivery) must complete 30 credits in required courses and six hours of thesis or elective credits. Visit the GP IDEA website for additional program information.

Distribution of courses for Option I or III Distance Delivery includes:

3	hours in TMFD 851: Consumer Behavior
3	hours in TMFD 852: Professional Advancement
3	hours in TMFD 854: Promotional Strategies in Merchandising
3	hours in TMFD 855: Retail Theory and Current Practice
3	hours in TMFD 862: International Retail Expansion
3	hours in TMFD 863: Retail Analytics
3	hours in TMFD 864: Financial Merchandising Implications
3	hours in TMFD 865: Strategic Planning
3	hours in TMFD 866: Product Design, Development, and Evaluation
3	hours in TMFD 875: Research Methods
6	hours thesis or elective credits, as arranged by TMFD Major Advisor
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36	hours total

### **MINOR IN TEXTILES, MERCHANDISING AND FASHION DESIGN**

Graduate students from other programs who want to minor in TMFD need to complete the following:

- 12 credit hours of 800/900-level work in various TMFD areas, or
- 9 credit hours of 800/900-level work in one TMFD area (i.e. textile science, apparel design, material culture, or merchandising)

Only graduate-approved courses can be included in the minor, thus Independent Studies and Advanced Problems are not included. Refer to the Graduate Bulletin for a list of graduate courses. All minors must be approved by the TMFD Graduate Committee Chair and a member of TMFD must serve as a member on the student's Supervisory Committee.

### III. Academic Standards and Guidelines

#### REGISTRATION GUIDELINES

All full-time Master's students are expected to have a minimum of nine credit hours per semester. A maximum credit load is 12 credits per semester. A student with an assistantship is expected to qualify for full-time status (see Assistantship section for more details).

Full-time status requires at least nine credit hours during an academic semester, or at least three credit hours during a five-week summer session.

With approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies, students in the final semester of an Option I Master's Degree may register for fewer than the minimum hours required while maintaining full-time status. Students who elect to register for fewer hours cannot be employed for more than 20 hours per week.

#### MINIMUM GRADE REQUIREMENTS

The minimum grade requirements, as noted in the Graduate Studies Bulletin, are as follows:

- A minimum grade of B is required for graduate credit in 800-level courses with a 400-level counterpart
- A minimum grade of C or P (pass) is required for graduate credits in 800-level courses in minor, collateral, or supporting areas of work
- A minimum grade of C or P (pass) is required for graduate credit in 900-level courses or 800-level courses without 400-level counterparts

A student failing to receive a minimum acceptable grade for graduate-level credit may not continue his/her program without permission of the TMTD Graduate Committee.

#### GRADING BREAKDOWN

Grading will be consistent with expectations for graduate-level work. A grade of:

- "A" indicates the student has demonstrated outstanding ability in integrating ideas and presenting them in written, oral, or visual form according to highest academic standards
- "B" indicates that the student has been above average in performance but needs development in integration of ideas, the presentation of material, or a combination thereof
- "C" indicates that the student has met the basic requirements of the course but needs more work on integrating ideas, presenting material, or a combination thereof

- “D” or below indicates the performance has not been satisfactory and graduate credit cannot be given

## **INCOMPLETE GRADES**

Incompletes must be removed prior to the deadline for filing the final examination report for the Master’s Degree. The student must also be admitted to full graduate standing before the final examination report is filed.

### **Incomplete Grades for Research, Thesis, or Dissertation Hours**

Incomplete grades for research, thesis or dissertation hours are no longer assigned. The following may be assigned:

- IP (In progress): indicates satisfactory work in progress (i.e., student is making progress or effort as determined by the faculty supervisor). The "IP" would stand until the final examination, at which time a grade of "P" or a letter grade for all dissertation hours is submitted to the Registrar.
- XP (No progress): indicates students are not making adequate progress on their thesis or dissertation work. Consecutive grades of "XP" (as determined by the graduate program committee) may result in the graduate committee taking action to inform the student and Graduate Studies regarding continuation of the student's graduate study.

## **ANNUAL EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

All students will be evaluated each year for academic performance and progress toward a graduate degree. It is the student’s responsibility to complete the Annual Evaluation of Academic Progress for Graduate Students form and provide to the Major Advisor for review before the end of Spring semester. Feedback from the Major Advisor will be given on the graduate student’s performance and progress. If the student is not making academic progress, the Major Advisor will require the student to create a stringent timeline for making academic progress during the forthcoming semester. If the timeline is dismissed by the student and/or grade expectations are not met, academic probation and/or termination will be considered. A checklist for completing the Master’s Degree is available in Appendix A.

## **PROBATION AND TERMINATION**

Graduate students are expected to maintain a high level of achievement. Students who do not maintain satisfactory progress may be subject to being placed on probation, be terminated from a degree program, or be denied permission to continue graduate studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Any student on probation will not be able to receive a graduate degree.

Probation or termination recommendations may be made under any one of the following conditions:

- Violations of the Student Code of Conduct as specified in the UNL Graduate Studies Bulletin
- Failure to satisfy Scholastic Grade Requirements as specified in the UNL Graduate Studies Bulletin
- Failure in qualifying examinations, preliminary examinations, comprehensive examinations, or final oral/written examinations
- Failure to master the methodology and content in one's field in a manner that is sufficient to complete a successful thesis or dissertation
- Ethical misconduct or lack of professional promise in the professional field (for fields leading to licensure or certification)
- Failure to satisfy conditions required for removal of probationary status

### **LENGTH OF PROGRAM**

Students have 10 consecutive years from the start of their first graduate courses to complete their degrees.

### **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

All graduate students are to follow the Student Code of Conduct. Refer to the Graduate Studies Bulletin regarding student rights and responsibilities.

## **IV. Advisor and Supervisory Committee**

### **ADVISOR**

A temporary Major Advisor will be assigned to each graduate student. The selection of a permanent Major Advisor will be between the student and professor. A Major Advisor advises on academic coursework, the Memorandum of Courses, and the thesis or project. It is the student's responsibility to secure the commitment of a TMFD faculty member to serve as a Major Advisor. The student will work with the Major Advisor to develop a committee no later than the sixth week of their second semester, to the extent possible.

If a student's Major Advisor cannot continue as the chair of the student's Supervisory Committee, the remainder of the committee will determine the best course of action for assisting the student in completing his or her Master's program. If another TMFD faculty member holds expertise in the student's area of research or creative project, he/she will be asked to assume the Major Advisor's position. When no current TMFD faculty holds expertise and the former Major Advisor has left the University's employment, the

committee will work in concert with the student to solidify and appoint a temporary Major Advisor to chair the committee until a new faculty member is in place.

## **SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

A Master's-level Supervisory Committee is comprised of, at minimum, the student's Major Advisor and two additional members of the UNL Graduate Faculty. The Supervisory Committee will be led by the student's Major Advisor, who will serve as the chairperson. At least three faculty members must serve on the Supervisory Committee, which includes the Major Advisor.

A committee must be determined no later than the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the second semester of the student's program. If a student has a minor, one of the additional members of the Supervisory Committee must represent the minor department.

The Supervisory Committee will meet to review the Memorandum of Courses and the student's thesis or project proposal. Members of the Supervisory Committee will serve as mentors to the students, as well as read materials and the thesis or project for the final oral examination. Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee include:

- Review the appropriateness of the courses chosen for the student's career goals
- Determine the acceptability of the number and type of transfer credits, if any
- Review inclusion of departmental program requirements
- Review academic progress and make recommendations upon request of the Major Advisor
- Make critical recommendations for the work proposed for the thesis or project

## **V. Completion of Required Coursework**

### **MEMORANDUM OF COURSES**

The Memorandum of Courses must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies before the student has received grades/incompletes in more than one-half of the coursework listed on the Memorandum. All courses listed on the Memorandum of Courses must be taken for a grade unless the course is offered as Pass/No Pass only. The Memorandum of Courses must be approved by the Supervisory Committee.

If the student is not ready to present his/her proposal at the time that the Memorandum of Courses is filed, the student must submit the project topic and scope in writing to the Supervisory Committee. Additional courses may be required depending on the nature of the thesis or project.

Minor revisions in the Memorandum of Courses may be necessary. All minor revisions may be approved by the Major Advisor, Supervisory Committee, and the Dean of Graduate

Studies. To continue the approval process of the minor revision, the Major Advisor will send an email to the Master's Specialist in the Office of Graduate Studies before the course in question has begun.

### **Memorandum of Courses Review**

Each graduate student's performance will be reviewed by the student's Supervisory Committee during the Memorandum of Courses meeting. In the event that the student's performance has not been satisfactory in the judgment of the Major Advisor and the graduate faculty, the student will be immediately advised of the unsatisfactory status. Students with various roles should consider the following:

- Students with an assistantship: May complete the academic year despite an unsatisfactory grade.
- Students on provisional status: May enroll in the next semester to have one more semester's performance considered, despite an unsatisfactory grade.

Any student receiving unsatisfactory grades will not be permitted to continue the program if two semesters of study prove to be unacceptable to the Major Advisor and graduate faculty.

### **RESEARCH CREDITS FORM**

Students enrolling in research, project, thesis, or dissertation hours must complete the Research Credits form for permission to register. The completed Research Credit form is to be discussed between the Major Advisor and student before permission to enroll is granted. Students are expected to fulfill objectives and activities before the end of the enrolled semester.

## **VI. Completion of Options**

### **OPTION I: THESIS OPTION**

Option I requires the completion of a thesis, which represents an original research study. The thesis involves a minimum of six credit hours in TMFD 899. One credit hour of TMFD 899 should be used for proposal development.

### **IRB**

Research involving human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data collection. Proposals to IRB must be submitted on NUGrant. Check the Office of Graduate Studies website for links to IRB information.

## Format of Thesis

The Office of Graduate Studies has set guidelines for the formatting of the thesis. Refer to the Office of Graduate Studies website for instructions on the preparation and submission of the thesis.

## Thesis Proposal

The written proposal should contain the following:

- Introduction to the study and topic
- Significance and need of the study
- Literature review
- Methods or procedures
- Timeline of work
- Proposed budget
- List of references (following an appropriate style manual)

## Thesis Proposal Review by the Supervisory Committee

A date for the thesis proposal review is to be established at least 30 days in advance. The proposal will be sent to the Supervisory Committee at least two weeks in advance of the proposal meeting. Students should refrain from scheduling proposal meetings during dead week or final exam week.

## Proposal Meeting for Thesis

The proposal meeting is the student's presentation of the proposed research. The proposal presentation should contain the following:

- Student's background, including education, employment, objectives of current program
- Overview of proposed work
- Previous work completed in the area of study
- Procedures or approach planned
- Time for questions

The Supervisory Committee and Major Advisor are expected to attend. Other faculty members and graduate students are also welcome. The vote of approval of the proposed work will be determined during the executive session involving only the Supervisory Committee. Required forms, such as the Memorandum of Courses, may also be reviewed during this meeting, as initiated by the student.

## Final Oral Examination for Thesis

The final oral examination is scheduled at the completion of the thesis and gives the student an opportunity to present and defend the thesis. The student must provide the

Major Advisor, Supervisory Committee, and the Office of Graduate Studies with a copy of the completed thesis at least two weeks (one week in summer sessions) in advance of the scheduled oral examination. The oral exam may not be possible during the summer months. A student is not eligible for the oral examination until the completed thesis has been reviewed by the Major Advisor.

### **Thesis Review by the Office of Graduate Studies**

An electronic copy of the thesis and abstract must be presented to the Master's Specialist and the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks (one week in the summer session) before the date of the student's final oral examination. Students are not eligible for an oral examination until the thesis is completed and approved by the Major Advisor. After the thesis has been successfully defended, it needs to be electronically submitted to the Master's Specialist for a final review prior to uploading to Digital Commons.

### **Copies of Thesis**

Bound copies of the thesis may be requested by the student's Major Advisor or other Supervisory Committee members.

### **OPTION II: PROJECT-BASED OPTION**

Option II requires the completion of a project, which is to provide the student opportunities to perform in creative, educative, or exploratory/descriptive ways. Option II requires work in a minor area, as well as a project which represents mastery of a topic. Projects take the form and approach from the nature of the problem being investigated. Option II projects represent scholarly activities, such as:

- A pilot or exploratory study
- Creative activity meant for public review
- Curating an exhibition

A minimum of six credit hours (TMFD 996) may be devoted to the Option II project. One credit hour should be used for proposal development. Option II requires written documentation, and could include slides, portfolios, visual documentation, and a written review of the work in the final document.

### **Project Proposal Review by the Supervisory Committee**

A date for the project proposal review is to be established at least 30 days in advance. The proposal will be sent to the Supervisory Committee at least two weeks in advance of the proposal meeting. Students should refrain from scheduling proposal meetings during dead week or final exam week.

## Proposal Meeting for Project

The proposal meeting is the student's presentation of the proposed project. The proposal presentation should contain the following:

- Student's background, including education, employment, objectives of current program
- Overview of proposed work
- Previous work completed in the area of study
- Approach for project
- Time for questions

The Supervisory Committee and Major Advisor are expected to attend. Other faculty members and graduate students are also welcome. The vote of approval of the proposed work will be determined during the executive session involving only the Supervisory Committee. Required forms, such as the Memorandum of Courses, may also be reviewed during this meeting, as initiated by the student.

## Final Oral Examination for Project

A final oral examination is scheduled at the completion of the Option II project, in which the student will present and defend the project. A copy of the project report and abstract must be presented for review to the student's Major Advisor, Supervisory Committee, and the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks (one week in summer sessions) before the date of the student's oral examination. The oral exam may not be possible during the summer months. A student is not eligible for the oral examination until the completed project has been reviewed by the Major Advisor.

## Project Review by the Office of Graduate Studies

An electronic copy of the project and abstract must be presented to the Master's Specialist and the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks (one week in the summer session) before the date of the student's final oral examination. Students are not eligible for an oral examination until the project is completed and approved by the Major Advisor. After the project has been successfully defended, it needs to be electronically submitted to the Master's Specialist for a final review prior to uploading to Digital Commons.

## Copies of Project

Bound copies of the project may be requested by the student's Major Advisor or other Supervisory Committee members.

## OPTION III: COURSE-BASED OPTION

Option III permits the substitution of more intensive work in advanced courses for the thesis or project. Under this option, the student must earn a minimum of 36 semester

hours of credit, at least 18 of which must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students (900-level or 800-level without 400-level counterparts).

To successfully complete Option III, either a written comprehensive examination (residential students) or a final oral examination for an internship project (distance delivery students) is required.

### **Written Comprehensive Examination**

The written comprehensive examination is required for students selecting Option III in a residential program. Written comprehensive exams are designed to:

- Demonstrate that the student can synthesize coursework and critically evaluate knowledge in the field, and
- Serve as a technique for unifying various learning experiences whereby they can be placed in perspective relative to needs of the profession.

Thus, written comprehensive exams are meant to measure outcomes related to the student's program rather than outcomes which are limited to particular courses. The Major Advisor, with assistance from the student's Supervisory Committee, will determine the components.

### ***Written Comprehensive Application and Timeline***

The written comprehensive exam is to be written no sooner than 10 months and no later than 8 weeks prior to completion of degree requirements. Option III students must complete 25 hours of coursework including TMFD 875 before they are eligible to take comprehensive examinations. A list of all coursework (including name of instructor) is required in the application for written comprehensive exams.

Applications for the written comprehensive exams must be completed and filed with the Major Advisor by:

- August 1 for students taking comprehensive exams during the Fall semester
- December 1 for students taking comprehensive exams during the Spring semester
- Comprehensive exams are not given in the summer

### ***Written Comprehensive Exam Format***

The format (closed book and/or take home) and time set for the comprehensive examination will be determined by the Major Advisor, with input from the student's Supervisory Committee. It is recommended that the comprehensive examination be designed to fit within the framework of two, four-hour blocks of writing time. The Major Advisor will be responsible for scheduling the examination and determining the exam venue.

### *Conditions of the Examination*

- The writing time for each section of the examination will not exceed the designated period.
- For the closed book portion of the comprehensive exams, students may bring paper, writing instruments, and a dictionary. If desired, the student may request that a departmental laptop be provided.
- Upon completion of each writing period, the student will submit the examination to the Major Advisor.
- A photocopy will be made and placed in the student's folder. The original will be circulated among the student's Supervisory Committee for evaluation.
- The student's Supervisory Committee will evaluate the student's performance on the written comprehensive. They will convene to evaluate the student's performance on the written comprehensive. A final vote will indicate one of the following: pass, fail, or rewrite. The student will be notified at the end of the three week period.

### **Final Oral Examination for Internship Project**

A final oral examination is scheduled at the completion of the Option III project, in which the student is expected to give a presentation concerning his/her internship experience. The oral exam is designed to assess the student's knowledge of the subject matter in the program. The student's Supervisory Committee will convene for the final oral exam.

## **VII. Assistantships**

If you have questions regarding assistantships, contact the TMFD Graduate Committee Chair or contact the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **ASSISTANTSHIP FUNDING**

All matriculated graduate students are considered for available assistantships, which are awarded as a function of availability of funds and relevance of the assistantship to the student's area of study. Assistantships are either supported by grant funds or state funds; thus, duties of graduate assistants vary. The monetary value of assistantships is established annually by the unit administrator or budget officer. The number of available assistantships is dependent on internal and external funding of departmental research programs, as well as existing assistantship commitments to students in the graduate program.

Assistantship awards are made on a competitive basis. Recipients must demonstrate satisfactory progress toward completion of degree requirements and fulfillment of the job description of the assistantship (i.e. work performed equivalent to the budgeted

remuneration) to maintain the assistantship award. Assistantships are generally available on a nine-month basis, although some may be awarded for a semester only.

Master's-level students typically will not be funded beyond two years of their program, unless additional funds are secured by faculty or the department for their support. Please keep this in mind as you plan your program.

Questions regarding withholding of FICA and Medicare (Social Security) taxes should be addressed to Payroll.

### **TUITION WAIVERS FOR ASSISTANTS**

Most academic year assistantships include tuition remission during the semester of appointment and may include tuition remission for the summer. During the summer session, graduate assistantships are available with appropriate stipends, but do not automatically include a tuition waiver for credit hours taken during the summer sessions.

Eligibility for 12-hour graduate assistant tuition waivers:

- The appointment must be continuous and for four full months within the semester or must be for the academic year, and
- The assistantship or combination of assistantships in one or more departments must total at least 33% FTE which is equivalent to 13.33 hours per week (a range of 12-15 hours per week is acceptable), and
- The stipend will be at the minimum amount as specified by the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **REGISTRATION GUIDELINES FOR ASSISTANTS**

A student with an assistantship is expected to qualify for full-time status and may take no more than the following number of credit hours:

- 12 credit hours maximum for assistants working 8-16 hours per week
- 10 credit hours maximum for assistants working 17-20 hours per week

If a graduate assistant registers for credits in excess of the maximum allowed, he/she will be required to drop the excess credit at his/her expense.

### **ASSISTANTSHIP TASKS AND EXPECTATIONS**

Assistantship responsibilities and benefits are outlined in the assistantship letter of offer. The assistantships are competitively awarded and typically require 13 to 20 hours of service per week. Terms of employment for the graduate assistantship include the full obligation to the graduate assistantship hours the week before classes begin and the week after final examination week. Usual academic holidays are included, but vacations and sick leave are

not awarded, and arrangements must be made to work for the time missed. Also consult the Graduate Studies Bulletin for assistantship responsibilities.

Graduate assistants are expected to behave ethically and exhibit the highest level of social responsibility. Class attendance and meeting the graduate assistant position description are just a part of these expectations. Graduate assistants are expected to be:

- Trustworthy
- Responsible
- Fair
- Caring
- Respects others
- A good citizen
- Thorough with assistantship responsibilities

As part of their professional development experiences, graduate assistantships are evaluated each Fall and Spring semesters by their supervising faculty and the department chair.

### **TERMINATION OF ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

Continuation of TMFD graduate assistantships and UNL graduate fellowships may be denied to recipients under the following conditions:

- Failure to satisfy Scholastic Grade Requirements
- Violations of the Student Code of Conduct
- Failure in qualifying examinations, preliminary examinations, comprehensive examinations
- Failure to make satisfactory progress in a graduate program

### **Resigned or Terminated Assistant: Tuition Payment Responsibilities**

If a graduate student resigns or the assistantship is terminated during the semester before four full months of service, all tuition benefits will be lost. The student is then responsible for the total tuition payment and health insurance premiums. Refer to the Office of Graduate Studies website for more information.

## Appendix A: Master's Degree Milestones

For a complete list of Master's Degree Milestones, visit the Office of Graduate Studies website.

- Select and declare a major academic advisor (if different than assigned temporary advisor)
- Determine a topic of interest for Option I, II, or III requirements
- Select and secure Supervisory Committee members
- Complete the Memorandum of Courses
- Discuss Memorandum of Courses with Supervisory Committee members
- File Memorandum of Courses with the Office of Graduate Studies
- Work with Major Advisor to complete Option I, II, or III requirements
- Propose Option I, II, or III requirements to Supervisory Committee
- Apply for graduation (beginning of final semester)
- Schedule defense of Option I, II, or III requirements
- Send Option I, II, or III requirements to committee
- Defend Option I, II, or III requirements with committee
- Submit final forms (removal of incomplete 899 grades, examination forms)