

# Indigenous Studies Program - University of Kansas

## A Handbook for Graduate Students

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This handbook is for informational purposes and does not constitute a contract. Degree requirements currently enforced appear in the KU [catalog](#) under the Indigenous Studies section.

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### **Melinda Adams**

*Langston Hughes Assistant Professor in Indigenous Studies and Geography & Atmospheric Science*

Research Interests: Traditional Ecological Knowledge, revitalization of cultural burns in collaboration with Tribal Nations in Northern California, plant and soil physical-chemical responses to cultural fire, land stewardship.

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### **Kent Blansett**

*Langston Hughes Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies and History; Founder and Executive Director, American Indian Digital History Project*

Research Interests: Native Nationalism & Red Power, Indigenous studies, Native North America, global Indigenous history, American West, 20<sup>th</sup>-century American experience, urban history, military history, biography, popular culture, digital history, public history.

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### **Joseph Brewer, II**

*Professor, Environmental Studies and Indigenous Studies*

Research Interests: Indigenous land tenure, sovereignty, Indigenous ecosystems management, natural resources management, traditional ecological knowledge, resilience and adaptation.

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### **Sarah Deer**

*University Distinguished Professor, Indigenous Studies and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies*

Research Interests: The intersection of federal Indian law and victims' rights; tribal law; violence against Native women. Chief Justice for the Prairie Island Indian Community Court of Appeals.

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### **Ward Lyles**

*Associate Professor, Urban Planning Program and Indigenous Studies*

Research Interests: Environmental planning, land use planning, research methods, statistics, sustainable, planning, cities, natural hazards, climate change, mitigation, adaptation, social networks, network analysis, plan quality, plan implementation

## Affiliate Faculty

Our affiliate faculty offer relevant courses in other academic disciplines, serve on students' master's defense committees, and are eligible to serve as students' faculty advisors. You can find the full list of current [Indigenous Studies affiliate faculty members](#) on the program's website.

## University Offices

Your unit's Director, COGA Graduate Program Coordinator - Advising, and/or Education Program Coordinator is your first stop for any questions related to graduate study or requirements. If you would like to research an issue prior to speaking with your program or if you still have questions, the following offices can provide assistance:

### [College Office of Graduate Affairs \(COGA\)](#)

COGA oversees graduate affairs and administers University policy for programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The COGA website contains comprehensive information on requirements and processes pertaining to graduate education at KU. Most common questions can be answered with the information provided there, including questions regarding [enrollment changes or forms](#), University policies regarding [exams](#) and committee requirements, and University [graduation requirements](#). The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' [Master's Hooding Ceremony](#) is coordinated by COGA.

COGA reviews all student petitions of University and College policy, issuing decisions on behalf of the College or referring as required to a faculty committee and/or the Office of Graduate Studies. The more common student petitions relate to [Enrollment](#), [Leave of Absence](#), and [Time Limit Extensions](#).

### [Office of Graduate Studies](#)

Graduate Studies is the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies at KU. The Executive Council of Graduate Studies sets policies and regulations governing graduate study and offers various workshops for graduate students throughout the year. While COGA should be your first stop for any questions your program cannot answer, you may be referred to Graduate Studies for certain matters, especially for questions about [GTA/GRA/GA appointments and policies](#).

### [Graduate Admissions](#) (Within the Office of Enrollment Management)

Contact Graduate Admissions for questions regarding the KU Online Application for Graduate Study, Slate, English proficiency requirements, and official transcripts.

### [Office of the Registrar \(OUR\)](#)

Contact OUR for questions related to enrollment (if the question cannot be resolved via the enrollment changes link provided above under COGA), tuition, campus fees, the academic calendar, and fee petitions.

### **[Financial Aid & Scholarships](#)**

Contact Financial Aid for questions related to the disbursement of scholarships, fellowship awards, loans, and FAFSA.

### **[International Support Services \(ISS\)](#)**

Contact ISS with questions related to international students including enrollment requirements, international student insurance, obtaining a social security card, I-20 questions, and any issue related to student visas. While other offices on campus such as the AEC, Human Resources, or the Registrar may also handle related matters, because the students' legal status in the country may be affected, it is recommended that students contact ISS first.

# General Department Policies & Procedures

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## Admission

Candidates applying for admission to the master's or graduate certificate program in Indigenous Studies must complete the online application through [Graduate Admissions](#). Applicants must upload the supporting application documents listed below to the online application. If you are interested in pursuing a joint M.A./J.D. with the KU School of Law, you will need to apply to both schools. Those interested in the PSM + ISP graduate certificate must complete separate applications to each program.

## Timelines

The Indigenous Studies Program accepts students on a near-rolling basis. Students may apply to be admitted for either the fall or spring semester.

- Fall application deadline: August 1
  - Priority deadline for fall funding consideration (funding is rarely available for a spring start): April 1
- Spring application deadline: December 15

The Admissions Committee, which is comprised of a group of Executive Committee members, aims to review applications and release admission decisions within one month of receipt of a completed application.

## Required M.A. Application Materials:

- **Official transcript(s)** from all undergraduate or graduate institution(s) from which you have earned or will earn a degree
  - You may attach scanned versions of official transcripts OR send an official copy directly to KU at [graduateadm@ku.edu](mailto:graduateadm@ku.edu).
- **Writing sample of at least 10 pages**
  - Choose your best academic work. We're looking for your ability to communicate clearly, think critically, and perform research.
- **2-page personal statement** explaining how a master's degree in Indigenous studies will benefit you and why you will successfully complete the degree. The personal statement should answer:
  - Why is Indigenous studies the right fit for your interests?
  - Who among our affiliate faculty would you like to work with on your research?
  - What would you like to do with your master's degree?
  - If you have low grades on your transcript, please address them in your statement
- **Resume or curriculum vitae** listing your educational and employment history, any scholarships/fellowships, internships, awards, etc.
- **Three letters of recommendation from instructors (current or former)**



- The Letter of Recommendation system automatically sends the recommendation form to the contacts provided by the applicant at the time of application.
- Be sure your recommenders can speak to your ability to handle the rigors of academia.
  - We suggest at least two of your recommendations come from professors you've taken courses from.
- These letters should help us understand why Indigenous studies fits your research and career goals.

If an applicant is not a native speaker of English, they must verify their English proficiency. Please see Graduate Admissions' [English Proficiency Requirements webpage](#) for additional information.

## **Required Graduate Certificate Application Materials:**

### ***Current KU Students***

Current graduate students complete the [online application](#) and submit these required materials:

- a letter stating your interest in Indigenous studies and its relationship to your graduate course of study;
- a current advising report;
- a letter of support from your graduate degree program.

You must be in good standing with your graduate degree program to participate in the certificate program.

### ***Non-KU Students***

If you aren't currently enrolled at KU, you'll [complete an online application](#), pay a \$30 application fee and submit these required materials:

- a letter stating your interest in the Indigenous Studies graduate certificate;
- an official copy of your [college transcript](#);
- two letters of recommendation from persons familiar with your academic work or potential for graduate study.

## **Non-Degree-Seeking Admission**

The Indigenous Studies Program accepts applications for graduate non-degree-seeking status. Typically, non-degree-seeking applicants do not intend to work toward an advanced degree. Applicants interested in applying for graduate non-degree-seeking status must identify the courses in which they wish to enroll prior to completing the online application. Permission to enroll in a graduate-level Indigenous Studies course must be granted by the [instructor](#) of the course.

Non-degree-seeking applications are accepted on a rolling basis. The suggested application deadlines are July 15 for fall admission and December 15 for spring admission.

To be considered for graduate non-degree-seeking admission, an applicant must submit the following materials:

1. A completed application, along with a non-refundable application fee, submitted online through [Graduate Admissions](#).
2. A personal statement, 1 to 2 pages total, double-spaced. The statement should cover: (a) the courses you hope to enroll in and your reasoning behind selecting those particular courses, (b) your relevant experience and background, (c) your preparedness for completing graduate-level coursework, and (d) anything else you think is important for us to know. If you believe your academic record does not reflect your potential to perform well as a non-degree-seeking graduate student, please provide an explanation.
3. Copies of transcript(s) from undergraduate and graduate institution(s) you have attended. Applicants may attach a scanned version of their official transcripts to the online application.

The Office of Graduate Studies requires all applicants, international or domestic, whose native language is not English to demonstrate English proficiency. Please review Graduate Admissions' [English Proficiency Requirements webpage](#) for additional information.

## Financial Aid & Scholarships

Financial assistance for master's students is available through fellowships, grants, assistantships, and loans. Finding fellowships and scholarships can be a time-consuming but a fruitful process. The [ISP website](#) lists major organizations that offer funding for Native students. However, students should keep in mind that organizations and institutions offer scholarships and fellowships to students based on residency, educational discipline, parent's occupation, disabilities, military service, career choice, etc.

The Indigenous Studies Program has a small pool of scholarship funds available each year, and they are awarded based on need. Please complete your FAFSA each year to ensure you are eligible for these funds.

ISP works closely with other units on campus to connect students with Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA), Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA), and Graduate Assistantships (GA), which come with tuition support and a stipend. Opportunities are communicated to students' KU email addresses when available, and the student must apply to be considered for the position.

Graduate certificate and non-degree-seeking students are not eligible for federal or institutional aid through KU.

The University of Kansas Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) office serves students, families, and the community by providing financial aid and scholarship information and resources to assist students in achieving their educational goals. Learn more on the [Financial Aid website](#).

**External Scholarships:**

[American Indian College Fund](#)

[American Indian Education Fund](#)

[American Indian Graduate Center](#)

[Association on American Indian Affairs](#)

[National Indian Education Association](#)

**Qualifying for In-State Tuition**

In accordance with Kansas State law (KSA 76-731), any person who is attending, or has attended Haskell Indian Nations University, and is an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe, is entitled to pay in-state tuition regardless of his or her domicile.

Further, the Kansas Legislature enacted a provision to allow certain students enrolling at a public institution of higher education in Kansas to have residency status for the purpose of tuition & fees. Students who are enrolled as a member of a Nation with historic ties to Kansas are eligible for residency status for tuition payment at KU.

More information can be found on the [Registrar's website](#).

## Enrollment

Students must enroll prior to the first day of classes each semester to avoid incurring a \$150 late enrollment fee. Course selection takes place during semesterly advising meetings with the program director and COGA Graduate Program Coordinator.

The COGA Graduate Program Coordinator can provide permission numbers for Indigenous Studies courses. If a student wishes to take a non-ISP class that requires a permission number, they must reach out to the instructor via email to request permission to enroll in the course.

**Changes to Enrollment/Late Enrollment**

Contact the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator if you need to enroll late or change your enrollment status mid-semester. We realize situations arise that require time away from the program or a decreased course load, and we are happy to help you navigate these changes in student status. Please speak with the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator before you make a schedule change, and if dropping or withdrawing, review the Registrar's information on [Dropping and Withdrawing from Courses](#).

Refer to the Enrollment portion of the University Policies & Degree Requirements section of the Handbook for enrollment policy considerations, including full-time student status, petitions, and leaves of absence.

## Grading

A grade of C or higher must be achieved for a course to count toward a degree in the Indigenous Studies Program; however, only grades of A or B are taken as indications that a graduate student has done satisfactory work.

### Incomplete Grades

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from completing the required assignments for a course, it is the **student's responsibility** to communicate with the instructor to determine if an incomplete grade is appropriate. The terms of the incomplete arrangement, including the lapse date and the list of work to be completed, are developed by the instructor. Please note, an instructor is **not required** by the University or the Indigenous Studies Program to offer the option of an incomplete. Students with two or more incomplete grades on their record may be placed on academic probation (see the [Good Standing](#) section below).

### Grading of Thesis Hours

For students pursuing the thesis completion option, ISP 899 Master's Thesis hours are graded on the SP/LP/NP scale. The below table provides descriptions of each grade and the action the Program may take based on the grade received.

Grade	Description of Grade	Action by Program
Satisfactory Progress (SP)	The progress made during the semester supports timely completion of the thesis. The student met the goals for the semester established by the faculty advisor.	No action – the student is making satisfactory progress
Limited Progress (LP)	The progress made may cause delays in the completion of the thesis. The student did not fully complete the goals agreed upon by the faculty advisor.	If a student receives more than 2 consecutive LP grades, the Executive Committee will review the student's record and may recommend academic probation and/or the completion of a mentoring agreement. If the student does not meet the terms of their probation, they may be considered for dismissal.
No Progress (NP)	The student did not show any evidence of progress on the thesis.	If a student earns a grade of NP, they are not making satisfactory academic progress toward degree. The Executive Committee will review the student's record and may recommend academic probation, the completion of a mentoring agreement, or dismissal.

Students should carefully review the Grading portion of the [University Policies & Degree Requirements](#) section of this handbook.

## Academic Integrity & Misconduct

The Indigenous Studies Program considers academic integrity essential to our work and we expect students to adhere to its principles when conducting research. This means that students acknowledge the sources they use in their academic work and cite them fully and correctly; not acknowledging a source constitutes plagiarism. Students should consult with faculty well before due dates if they are not sure how to handle a source.

Academic integrity also means that work on examinations and assignments must be carried out by authorized means. Students are subject to sanctions by the University for Academic Misconduct if they violate these principles. Definitions are provided in the [University Senate Rules and Regulations](#).

## Good Standing

Good standing in the Indigenous Studies Program requires timely completion of the full curriculum, which is designed to be completed within 4 academic semesters. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and carry no more than 2 incomplete grades at any one time.

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences automatically places a student on probation if their cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) falls below a “B” (3.00). ISP may place you on probation for other reasons, including:

- You are not making adequate progress toward your degree.
- You have not identified a faculty advisor by the end of your second semester in the program.
- 2 or more of your grades are unresolved incompletes.
- You have enrolled in nothing but portfolio or thesis preparation hours for 2 semesters and have yet to defend and graduate.
- Unprofessional student to student, student to staff, or student to faculty conduct. A student who engages in unprofessional conduct will receive one written warning before being placed on probation.

For additional information on good standing as well as probation and dismissal procedures for students who do not meet the requirements for good standing, see the [University Policies and Degree Requirements](#) section of this document.

## Annual Student Progress Review

A student’s standing in the Indigenous Studies Program is evaluated each spring semester based on the criteria in the Good Standing section above. The director and COGA Graduate Program

Coordinator review the student's grades and academic record to determine if the student is in good standing in the program.

The student receives the result of this review via email. The email includes steps the student must take to return to or remain in good standing. The email also contains the student's coursework checklist and the ISP Two-Year Plan so the student can establish a plan for the future semester.

For students who fall out of good standing, the Executive Committee will review their record to determine if academic probation, a mentoring agreement, or dismissal is appropriate.

## Advising & Mentorship

The ISP Director serves as the general advisor to all enrolled ISP students. At the time of your admission, the Director and COGA Graduate Program Coordinator will assist you with choosing your first semester's classes. Following your first semester of enrollment, the program recommends that you identify a main faculty advisor to mentor you throughout your time in the program. You will eventually identify two other faculty members who, along with your faculty advisor, will serve as your M.A. defense committee. You must meet with your faculty advisor at least once per semester.

The faculty advisor serves critical roles such as supervising a student's research and serving as the chair of a student's M.A. exam committee. Students' interests often change throughout their graduate careers, and we encourage them to think carefully about which faculty members are a good fit with their research projects and both intellectual and professional goals. Students are free to change faculty advisors at any time during the master's program. Students considering a change must understand that their new advisor is not accountable for the decisions, advice, or approvals of their colleagues, and the new advisor may expect changes in the plan of study. Students should communicate about these changes with a potential new advisor and the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator as part of their consideration to change advisors.

Once a student decides to change advisors, they may initiate the following process:

The student must inform their current advisor/committee member and should inform the Director of the Indigenous Studies Program and the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator of their intent to change advisors. In the event of a disagreement on the part of the current advisor, the issue should be brought to the Director of the Indigenous Studies Program or the Executive Committee if the current advisor is the Director of the Indigenous Studies Program. A change of advisors must not have any effect on the student's eligibility for program hiring or other support. The Director of the Indigenous Studies Program should make every reasonable effort to facilitate the change of advisor. The student is encouraged to seek advice from faculty, peers, etc., when deciding to change advisors.

A student seeking a change in advisor is encouraged to approach another faculty member to ask them to serve as the new advisor. Prior to making a decision and providing an answer to the

student, the faculty member may consult the Director of the Indigenous Studies Program and the current faculty advisor of the student for more information if necessary. Depending on the circumstances, it may be appropriate for the current advisor and another graduate faculty member of the Indigenous Studies Program to serve as co-advisors. In this case, the Indigenous Studies Program should encourage this arrangement, and the relevant parties should work out the details.

The student must inform the Director of the Indigenous Studies Program and the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator when a decision on change of advisors has been made. The student must still meet all degree requirements of the University, the College, and the Indigenous Studies Program. In the event that the change of advisor occurs late in a student's graduate career, the student and the new advisor should consult with the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator to determine what steps can or should be taken to help the student make timely progress toward degree completion.

The student must secure a new advisor within three months of initiating the change. A student who is unable to identify a new advisor within the three-month period may be placed on academic probation. Failure to secure a new advisor by the end of the subsequent semester may result in dismissal.

## Grievance Procedures

If you wish to make a complaint involving an ISP-affiliated faculty or staff member, or concerning ISP policies or decisions, you may seek redress by presenting the grievance in writing to the ISP Director. If the Director cannot resolve the matter, the Director will forward the grievance to the ISP Executive Committee. If no resolution is forthcoming, you may proceed with the appropriate University Grievances Procedures. You may also wish to contact the [University Ombuds Office](#).

The Indigenous Studies Program's grievance procedures approved by the University may be found by following this link: [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Grievance Procedures](#)

## Petitions

If a graduate student has a compelling reason to seek exemption from a program requirement or University policy, they may submit a petition to the ISP Executive Committee.

The student should consult with the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure the petition is necessary and that all appropriate documentation is collected to submit the petition. The COGA Graduate Program Coordinator forwards the information to the ISP Director who then refers the petition to the Executive Committee, which will convene to consider the petition.

In cases where the petition relates to a program requirement rather than a University policy, the Executive Committee will issue a final decision.



In cases where the petitioned policy or requirement is a University policy, the Executive Committee will decide whether to support the student's petition or not. If the Committee agrees to support the petition, they submit it to the College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA) along with supporting materials as required. The petition form specifies the supporting materials needed for each type of petition. COGA's [petitions webpage](#) provides additional information related to submitting petitions. Additional information regarding common University petitions, such as leave of absence, enrollment requirements, and time limit extensions may be found in the [University Policies & Degree Requirements](#) section of this document.

## Resources

### [Libraries](#)

ISP students are encouraged to meet individually with KU librarians and information technology specialists to ensure they have mastered skills and software programs associated with search strategies for subject and database guides, evaluating and citing sources, and using Endnote and other relevant computer software. The University has assigned a librarian to work individually with each department and program on campus.

### [Writing Center](#)

The KU Writing Center provides you with a safe, non-evaluative environment to develop as an academic writer. You must make an [appointment](#) for writing assistance, which can be in person, via Zoom, or emailed feedback.

The KU Writing Center staff also provide assistance with the creation and mentoring of Graduate Student Writing Groups. These Writing Groups provide graduate student writers with a community of writers and several complimentary types of support, including:

- Feedback on your writing.
- Encouragement to set and accomplish goals.
- Resources for resolving conflict and solving problems.
- Aid in overcoming "writer's block" and other writing challenges.
- Finding helpful contacts for writing partners and writing groups.

**Additional Resources can be found on the [ISP website](#)**

## Post-Graduation Support

### **Alumni**

ISP alumni represent a valuable network of experienced individuals who can provide you with contacts for seeking advice in placement and career development.



The ISP office maintains a list of alumni contacts. After you have graduated, please keep us apprised of your current address, email address, phone number, and information regarding your work, career, and accomplishments that we can post on our website.

The program provides support for graduate alumni in the areas of placement and advancement in a variety of career areas. ISP retains alumni records, including copies of M.A. theses and portfolios. After graduation, students should rely on ISP faculty to write letters of recommendation and to serve as references for job applications, grants, and additional education programs.

### **Letters of Recommendation**

When asking a faculty member to write a letter of recommendation, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Contact a faculty member first to ask if they are willing and/or have the time to write you a letter.
- If possible, provide the faculty member with all the necessary information one month before the deadline. This will allow them time to read and review your materials and request any additional documents.

You should ask the faculty member what documents they need, but in general, you should provide:

- Copies of specific evaluation forms (completely filled out, signed, dated, and with the confidentiality waiver or non-waiver signed);
- A clear indication of the letter's due date;
- Detailed information about to whom the faculty should give, email, or send the letter with the recipient's name, organization, and address clearly stated;
- A copy of your current Advising Report that indicates your coursework and grades;
- An up-to-date resume or curriculum vitae;
- Appropriate test scores, such as GRE or LSAT;
- Relevant supplementary materials, such as writing samples;
- A description of the job, program, or school to which you are applying;
- Personal statements or essays written as part of your application.

# Degree Requirements

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## Master of Arts in Indigenous Studies

Through a multidisciplinary program of study, the master's program educates students to become innovative and capable scholars, leaders, and mentors who bring Indigenous perspectives to academic settings, government and other public service, and the private sector. ISP equips students with the knowledge and skills to conduct theoretical and applied research and to develop innovative solutions to issues facing Indigenous communities. Students can take advantage of courses offered across the university to create an individualized program of study. Our affiliate faculty members have appointments in departments such as Anthropology, Applied Behavioral Science, Environmental Studies, Geography, History, Journalism, Law, and Linguistics.

## M.A. Degree Requirements

Students pursuing the M.A. in Indigenous Studies must successfully complete 30 graduate credit hours: a 3-hour core course plus 27 hours taken according to either Plan A (Portfolio), Plan B (Thesis), or Plan C (Comprehensive Exam).

### *Core Curriculum*

ISP 800 Indigenous Issues in the United States is the only required course for the M.A., and it focuses on contemporary issues relating to Indigenous peoples and nations within the United States, with particular emphasis on such issues as sovereignty, Indigeneity, colonialism, and decolonization. The course addresses varied disciplinary approaches to this range of issues and considers how this discourse bears upon scholarly conversations regarding broader themes in other selected fields of study.

18 hours of approved coursework taught from an Indigenous studies disciplinary perspective fulfill the remainder of the core curriculum. Courses are offered by Indigenous Studies, as well as departments such as Anthropology, Environmental Studies, English, Environmental Studies, Geography, History, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Law, Linguistics, Museum Studies, and Political Science. A list of approved courses can be found on the [ISP website](#).

A student who would like to enroll in a course not on the approved course list must submit a syllabus and a statement to the ISP Director explaining how their work in the course will incorporate an Indigenous studies perspective.

### *Plan A: Portfolio Option*

- [Core curriculum](#) (21 hours)
- 9 hours of electives OR 6 hours of electives and 3 hours of ISP 898 Master's Non-Thesis
- An M.A. examination: an oral examination in which the candidate defends their portfolio, developed through coursework, research or other creative activity that makes a meaningful contribution to the field of Indigenous studies.

The final portfolio will include three separate projects (research papers written in classes or creative projects) selected in consultation with the student's M.A. exam committee. The portfolio is accompanied by a written statement not to exceed 15 pages that connects the three projects comprising the portfolio, the content of which will be determined by the student in consultation with the faculty advisor and M.A. exam committee members. Students completing a project in visual or media arts summarize their creative research, process, and finished product in the written statement.

Neither a proposal nor a committee meeting are required to obtain approval to complete the Portfolio Option, but you do need email confirmation from your M.A. exam committee members that they are willing to serve on your committee.

### *Plan B: Thesis Option*

- [Core curriculum](#) (21 hours)
- 6 hours of electives
- 3 hours of ISP 899 Master's Thesis
- An M.A. examination: an oral examination in which the candidate defends their written thesis

The purpose of a master's thesis is to demonstrate your ability to:

- Identify and analyze an original issue, question, or problem of importance to the field of Indigenous studies.
- Conduct original, systematic research, applying the skills of critical thinking to relevant information.
- Apply the appropriate methodological tools and concepts to your analysis. Generate new knowledge in the form of data, ideas, and opinions that withstand careful scrutiny by individuals who are knowledgeable regarding the topic.
- Communicate and support your conclusions in written form in an organized and professional manner.

### *Thesis Proposal*

Format (*Suggested, Not Required*)

Title: Write a one-line title that expresses the main purpose of your thesis.

Abstract: Write a brief, one-page overview of your project. Explain why you are choosing this topic, what you hope to accomplish, and why the research is important to Indigenous communities.

Thesis Statement: In 1-3 sentences, state the purposes, hypotheses, or central questions of your research.

Methodology (or Approach): Explain by what means you plan to answer, determine, or evaluate your hypothesis or thesis statement. It is especially important that your methodology be appropriate to the issues or questions you are investigating, the available data, and both legal and ethical considerations pertinent to your field of study. Depending on your topic, methodology, and field,

this section may include a wide diversity of sources, including primary documents, secondary sources, and interviews and/or questionnaires. Please note that human subject research, including interviews and questionnaires, requires approval prior to the start of your research by the [Human Subjects Committee-Lawrence Campus](#).

Overview of Content: Provide an outline of your chapters, sections, and subsections.

Bibliography: List of articles, books, and other identified, relevant resources you will be utilizing.

Length: Note that the length of your proposal will depend upon the recommendations of your faculty advisor and M.A. exam committee.

#### *Thesis Proposal Committee Meeting*

You are required to meet with your full M.A. exam committee to obtain approval of your thesis proposal.

ISP is an interdisciplinary program that integrates the knowledge, perspectives, and expertise of faculty from several University departments and schools. Each discipline possesses its own standards, methodologies, theories, and rules of presentation and mechanics (formatting, citations, etc.). Therefore, you are urged to clarify with your faculty advisor, either prior to or during your proposal defense, expectations regarding:

- standards
- theories
- methodologies
- rules of presentation
- citation format
- any additional relevant issues of disciplinary importance that need to be addressed

Following the committee's approval of your proposal, you must provide the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator with a copy of your thesis proposal listing your committee members and signed by your faculty advisor/committee chair.

#### *Plan C: Comprehensive Exam Option*

- [Core curriculum](#) (21 hours)
- 9 hours of ISP 806 Directed Readings (3 hours with each M.A. exam committee member) in the final semester of enrollment
- An M.A. examination: an oral examination in which the candidate defends their written comprehensive exam

Students who select this option enroll in directed readings courses with each M.A. exam committee member during their final semester in the program to create and cover reading lists representative of the student's area(s) of interest in each faculty member's field.

The student completes a two-week take-home written comprehensive exam comprised of three questions created by each member of the M.A. exam committee and based on the reading lists covered during their directed readings courses. Responses to the questions are to be submitted as separate essays and should not exceed 15 typed pages per question, with citations under separate cover.

The M.A. exam committee reviews and grades the student's responses as pass or no pass. If a majority of committee members vote to pass the written exams, the essays become the student's portfolio and they can move on to the oral portfolio defense.

## **M.A. Exam Committee**

Following your second semester of enrollment, in consultation with your committee chair/faculty advisor, you will determine at least two additional faculty members to serve on your M.A. Exam Committee. All Committee members must be appointed to the graduate faculty. The composition of faculty members for the M.A. Exam Committees must be approved by the ISP Director. For University policy on M.A. Exam Committee composition, please refer to [University Policies & Degree Requirements](#) section of this handbook.

Once you have selected your M.A. Exam Committee and it has been approved by the ISP Director, please notify the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator.

### *Role of the Chair*

The thesis/portfolio/comprehensive exam is designed and executed in close collaboration with the student's primary faculty advisor/committee chair (or co-chairs, if applicable) and the other members of the committee. The chair will advise the student on the significance and feasibility of the project, useful readings and professional colleagues to consult, data collection and analysis procedures, drafting the project, and preparing for the oral defense.

While student/advisor preferences may differ, a good rule of thumb is regular correspondence between student and primary advisor throughout the second year of the program, with in-person or virtual meetings to discuss the project held monthly during the third semester and biweekly during the fourth semester. Student and chair should discuss the roles of secondary committee members, and their input throughout the research and writing process should be discussed with those committee members.

## **Oral Defense**

You must defend your thesis/portfolio/comp exam before your M.A. exam committee in a public forum. This is a 15- to 30-minute presentation followed by questions from the committee and other individuals in attendance. The oral defense of the thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam fulfills Graduate Studies' requirements for a master's examination. Use the oral defense to relate your thesis/portfolio/comp exam to the broader discourse in the field of Indigenous studies, and to thematic issues addressed in the program's core course.

One month prior to the oral defense date, you must provide committee members with completed copies of your thesis, portfolio, or written comprehensive exam essays, either in written or electronic form, depending upon their preferences.

Before you can set an oral defense date, the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator must confirm that you have met the program's M.A. requirements. Pre-approval from the College must be granted at least three weeks prior to the completion of the oral defense. This requires you to submit the following information **at least two months** before your expected defense date to the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator:

- Current title of thesis (thesis only)
- Proposed two-week window for defense. Please include any days and times for which you will be unavailable.
- List of your M.A. exam committee members
- Preferred defense format (in person, hybrid, or fully remote)
- Preferred defense room (if in person or hybrid)

The Graduate Program Coordinator will then poll your committee members for their availability to assist you in selecting the final date and time.

### *Evaluation of the Thesis/Portfolio/Comprehensive Exam and Oral Defense*

Each committee member will assign one of the three following evaluations to your project and oral defense performance based on the criteria in the [Thesis & Portfolio Rubric](#): Honors, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. The majority vote will determine the outcome.

Most projects will require at least minor revisions. If revisions are required by the committee, they must be *manageable* to implement before the semester grade deadline. Within *48 hours* of the defense, the committee chair must submit a checklist of specific revisions to be made to the written product. Revisions should not include integration of significant new readings or drafting of new sections (these should have already been raised during the drafting and advising process before the defense), unless student has not included material that was previously requested. If the committee believes that revisions are significant enough that they cannot be implemented by the semester graduation deadline, the committee should deem the capstone project a "fail" and the student will undertake revisions and defend in a subsequent semester.

You may attempt an oral defense for the M.A. degree a maximum of two times. Beginning a defense constitutes an attempt at the defense, even if you choose to terminate the session before you have finished.

Your second defense should occur within three to six months of your first attempt. The student can add or remove M.A. exam committee members between the first and second defense attempt by following the change of advisor process outlined in the [Advising & Mentorship](#) section of this handbook. Failure on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

Students may appeal a committee's negative decision to the ISP Executive Committee.

## Completion of Graduation Requirements

You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with all graduation requirements included in the [College's Master's Graduation Checklist](#). You must submit all graduation requirements by 11:59 p.m. CT on the graduation deadline to be eligible to graduate.

You are required to provide the ISP office with copies of any media constitutive to theses or portfolios in addition to the final copy of the written work.

## Suggested M.A. Program Timeline

The following schedule is based on fall semester admission and completion of the master's degree in four semesters, with May graduation. The information is a brief overview and is intended to *supplement*, not replace, the information provided by the ISP office, College Office of Graduate Affairs, or the Office of Graduate Studies. It is important that you refer to this Graduate Student Handbook for more detailed information about the program, requirements, due dates, and policies.

Semester 1	Credit Hours
ISP 800: Indigenous Issues in the US	3
500+ IS-related course	3
500+ IS-related course or elective	3

- ☐ Attend ISP orientation and explore the [graduate resources](#) available on campus.
- ☐ Reach out to resources on campus (Writing Center, Student Access, etc.) if you need additional academic support. Don't wait to get behind in coursework before you use their services.
- ☐ Get in the habit of checking your KU email account regularly
- ☐ Late in your first semester, research potential ISP faculty advisors

Semester 2	Credit Hours
700+ IS-related course	3
700+ IS-related course	3
500+ elective course	3

- ☐ Select a faculty advisor and meet with them at least twice per semester to discuss your plans for the remainder of your time in the program
- ☐ Start to think about your thesis, portfolio, or written comp exam and identify courses to support your research with your faculty advisor

Semester 3	Credit Hours
700+ IS-related course	3
700+ IS-related course	3
500+ elective course	3

- ☐ Begin to work on your thesis, portfolio, or written comp exam reading lists
- ☐ With the assistance of your faculty advisor, identify two other faculty members to serve on your M.A. exam committee. Work with Lauren Chaney if you have any questions about Graduate Studies' [committee policy](#).
- ☐ After you enroll in your semester 4 classes, contact Financial Aid to have your aid package adjusted if you will be enrolled in less than 9 credit hours in your final semester.

Semester 4	Credit Hours
ISP 899: Master's Thesis <u>OR</u> final course requirement for portfolio <u>OR</u> directed readings with each M.A. exam committee member for the written comp exam option	3

- ☐ Meet with your faculty advisor early in the semester to develop a meeting schedule and timeline to support the successful completion of your thesis, portfolio, or written comp exam
- ☐ Work with Lauren Chaney in February or March to begin the scheduling process for your final M.A. exam. Lauren will work with your committee to find a date and time that works for everyone.
- ☐ Apply for graduation via Enroll & Pay by March 1 to ensure your name appears in all graduation programs
- ☐ Submit all [graduation requirements](#) by 11:59 p.m. CT on the graduation deadline

## Dual Degree Program in Law and Indigenous Studies (J.D./M.A.)

This program allows you to earn a J.D. from KU Law and an M.A. in Indigenous Studies in three to four years. You'll train for leadership and policy-making roles in Indigenous communities worldwide, in higher education, and in state, national, and international institutions and organizations.

The objectives of this joint degree program are:

- to facilitate interdisciplinary studies;



- to support the interest of students who wish to pursue study in both fields; and
- to provide an educational opportunity that trains candidates for leadership and policy-making roles in Indigenous communities worldwide, in higher education, and in state, national and international institutions and organizations.

## Admission Considerations

Candidates for the dual program need to meet the separate admission requirements of the School of Law and the master's program in Indigenous studies. Admission into one school will create no presumption favoring admission into the other. To be admitted into the dual program, an applicant must be separately admitted to both programs and then must request to proceed in the dual program. The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is required for the law school application. There is no entrance examination required for Indigenous Studies.

Per American Bar Association policy, credit for the J.D. degree shall only be given for coursework taken after the student has matriculated in the law school. The law school shall not grant credit toward the J.D. degree for work taken in a pre-admission program. For this reason, **students should start the law program first.**

Students may apply to both degree programs simultaneously, but they are not required to do so. For students who are admitted into Law first, they should seek admission into the master's program as soon as possible and must be admitted into that program no later than the end of the spring semester of their second year of law study, but earlier application is recommended. For students who are admitted to the master's program first, they should seek admission into the School of Law as soon as possible and must be admitted into the School of Law no later than the end of their second semester of graduate study.

**NOTE:** Some of the Law and ISP courses are cross-listed, meaning they have a Law course number and an ISP course number. \*Only courses taken under the Law course number will count for law school credit. This is an important point, as the manner in which you enroll in classes can affect timely completion of the dual program, especially if you enroll in ISP first.

## Dual J.D/M.A. Program Requirements

The School of Law requires all J.D. candidates to earn ninety (90) credit hours to complete the degree. For students enrolled in the J.D./M.A. program, the School of Law will accept 9 credit hours earned from approved courses in the master's program in Indigenous Studies (ISP) toward the J.D. requirements.

Students in the joint degree program should note that while the School of Law requires a 2.0 grade point average in J.D. coursework to remain in good standing and graduate, the Office of Graduate Studies requires a 3.0 grade point average for all courses counting toward the M.A. in the ISP portion of the degree.

The master's program in ISP requires all candidates to earn 30 graduate credit hours. The master's program will accept for credit toward the M.A. degree 12 credit hours earned from approved courses in the School of Law.

Students may use 6 law hours toward satisfying their ISP specialization requirement and apply the balance of the 12 law hours for which they may receive master's credit toward their master's electives.

### *Sequencing of Courses*

Students who have been admitted to both programs and intend to pursue the joint degree program must complete the first 29 credits of required courses in the J.D. program. After completion of these 29 hours, course enrollment in either program or both concurrently is permitted. If a student begins in the M.A. program and is subsequently admitted to the J.D. program, they must take a Leave of Absence from the M.A. program to complete the first 29 hours of the J.D. before resuming M.A. coursework.

### *Law Courses that Will Count Toward the M.A. in Indigenous Studies*

Students may apply a maximum of 12 hours of law electives toward their master's degree from these courses:

LAW 914	Federal Indian Law (3) (ISP 824)
LAW 879	Comparative Law (3) (ISP 876)
LAW 995	Water Law (3)
LAW 974	Public International Law (3)
LAW 998	Tribal Judicial Support Clinic (3)

### *Master's Courses that Will Count Toward the J.D.*

Students may apply 9 credit hours of master's work toward their J.D. degree from the following courses:

ANTH 562	Mexamerica (LAA 302 / LAA 602)
ANTH 603	Shamanism Past and Present
ANTH 561	Indigenous Development in Latin America
GEOG 570	Geography of American Indians
HIST 890	Collqm American Hist 1492-1800
ISP 601	Indigenous Peoples of the World (GEOG 601)
ISP 800	Indigenous Issues in the United States

## **Indigenous Studies Graduate Certificate**

The Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Studies enhances the qualifications of students seeking careers in academic settings, government and other public service, and the private sector. The

certificate provides students with knowledge essential to understand a broad range of historical, political, religious, and social issues affecting Indigenous peoples. Students earn an additional credential while integrating knowledge of Indigenous issues into their own academic disciplines or professional training.

Completion of the Indigenous Studies Graduate Certificate represents an additional credential for graduate students from a variety of academic fields who are preparing for careers in research and teaching or professional practice. The certificate also enhances the qualifications of students seeking careers with Indigenous organizations, governments, and museums, among many other options.

Enrollment in the program is open to students admitted to a regular KU graduate program as well as students who are not currently enrolled at KU.

## **Curriculum and Certificate Requirements**

The Indigenous Studies Graduate Certificate requires 12 hours of coursework:

- ISP 800 Indigenous Issues in the United States (3 hours)
- 9 hours of graduate-level coursework taught from an Indigenous studies disciplinary perspective. Courses are offered by Indigenous Studies, as well as departments such as Anthropology, Environmental Studies, English, Geography, History, Law, and Political Science. A list of approved courses can be found on the [ISP website](#).

A student who would like to enroll in a course not on the approved course list must submit a syllabus and a statement to the ISP Executive Committee explaining how their work in the course will incorporate an Indigenous studies perspective.

## **Additional Curricular Options**

### **Directed Readings**

Directed Readings (ISP 806) are one-on-one independent studies with a faculty member. ISP 806 is a useful tool if KU does not offer a class that addresses a student's research interests or curricular needs.

To enroll, you must obtain the consent of the faculty member with whom you intend to work. The instructor must email the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator with the consent. Once consent is given, the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator will issue a permission number for the student to enroll in the course. You may not enroll in Directed Readings your first semester in the program without written permission from the ISP Director.

Once a faculty member has agreed to guide your Directed Readings, you must work in conjunction with that faculty member to complete a bibliography and outline of your planned work.

Students may count a maximum of 6 hours of approved Directed Readings toward the M.A. degree.

## **Internships**

If you choose to complete an internship, it should be in an area that advances your thesis or portfolio topic.

An internship provides you with an opportunity to:

- Obtain training and perform professional duties for academic credit at pre-approved agencies and organizations.
- Apply theoretical knowledge in a professional setting.
- Obtain the professional skills and knowledge outlined in your internship contract.
- Gain relevant career experience.

See the required [internship forms](#) for further information regarding duties, credit hours and grading, the internship process, required documents for your final internship portfolio, and frequently asked questions.

## **Study Abroad**

With your ISP Director and faculty advisor approval, you may attend study abroad programs that will provide you with a broader and comparative knowledge of Indigenous issues and worldviews, enhance cross-Indigenous cultural understanding, and increase career opportunities in Indigenous specialty areas.

# UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate Studies and the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, both hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included.

Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

## GENERAL POLICIES

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

### Admission

Degree or non-degree-seeking applicants must have a bachelor's degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

#### **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [Admission to Graduate Study](#)

### English Proficiency Requirements

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are three ways to prove English proficiency:

- Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.
- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to [graduateadm@ku.edu](mailto:graduateadm@ku.edu) for verification.

- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU [Applied English Center](#) (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.
- U.S. Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate Studies' [Spoken English Competency page](#).

#### **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study](#)
- [Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, Kansas Board of Regents Policy](#)
- [Graduate Credit](#)

## **Enrollment**

For graduate students in the College, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the program level. While units within the College may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full time (e.g. students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full-time enrollment as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). \*See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment.

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s).

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

**Students not enrolled by 11:59 p.m. the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any student not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must pay a fee to be reactivated.**

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the program of such plans in writing so a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the "Withdraw from the University" option.

Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current [Academic Calendar](#).**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on [Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript](#).

Your graduate program coordinator is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. In order to avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

#### **Related Policies:**

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)

- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

## **Graduate Credit (Including Transfer Credit)**

The Office of Graduate Studies [policy](#) on Graduate Credit defines KU's conditions for the following:

- Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course "counting" towards a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;
- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for master's students;
- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree-seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate-seeking student toward another graduate degree.

### **Transfer Credit**

The transfer credit option allows master's students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper-level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours that can be counted toward a KU master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS/Program Director. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the Ph.D. In circumstances where students enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the Ph.D. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

### **Reduced-Credit-Hour Degree**

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced-hour master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced-credit-hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify. A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript.



Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below.

In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS/Program Director. Students must also provide documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the Ph.D., reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

#### **Related Policies:**

- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Count Toward Degree Form](#)
- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#) (on Reduced-Hour-Master's Degree)

### **Credit/No Credit**

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

**No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement.** This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC [online request](#) form. Elections and changes to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found on the current KU [Academic Calendar](#). Please keep in mind, short courses may have [alternate dates](#).

The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

### Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)

### **Probation & Dismissal**

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student who is not making [satisfactory progress](#) toward completing their degree. The program initiates the probation process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

**Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative [GPA dropping below a B average \(3.0 on a 4.0 scale\)](#).** In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

Additionally, the College has set a 2.5 minimum GPA for students to be eligible for a semester of academic probation. In cases where a student's GPA drops below the minimum of 2.5, the student is considered ineligible for academic probation and will be dismissed by the College. Students are strongly advised to review the [College-specific policy on probation and dismissal](#) for more information about the 2.5 threshold for dismissal.

Students may also be placed on probation by their programs for other reasons that constitute a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis or dissertation
- Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams),
- Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)
- An unsatisfactory result in their program's annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the [Good Academic Standing policy](#) for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress.

Individual programs may have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their program graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the program will reconsider their continuation in the program. In most cases the program will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

**A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.**

**Related Policies:**

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

## **[Grading](#)**

The Office of Graduate Studies' [Grading policy](#) governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in [Article II](#) of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of Graduate Studies.

Students should also carefully review the [College-specific grading information](#), in particular the section on the SP/LP/NP grading scale for thesis and dissertation hours and the impacts of receiving a LP (limited progress) or NP (no progress). Students should also consult their adviser and the [program grading](#) section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on coursework counted toward any master's degree at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Coursework counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Additional information pertaining to graduate grading can be found on COGA's pages for [Retroactive Withdrawal](#), [Incomplete Grades](#), and [Graduate GPA](#). The Registrar's Office's also offers information on the [Credit/No Credit](#) option.

**Related Policies:**

- [University Senate Rules & Regulations](#)
- [Grading](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)

## Time Limits

The University expects that a master's degree should typically be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six-seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the link above and in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. To support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt it to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that the College's Mentoring Agreement is required for doctoral students who are within 2 years of exhausting their maximum time to degree. See the [College Graduate Regulations](#) or talk to your graduate program coordinator for more information.

### **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams](#) (on exam expiration and recertification)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time To Degree Information](#)
- [Graduate Degree Completion Agreement](#) (PDF)

## Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework while remaining in good standing with the University and the program and while "stopping the clock" on their time to degree.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director and review their program's internal petition procedures. Units or the Director may request documentation to support the student's need for a leave of absence; however, the only document that the College requires for the petition is the Leave of Absence form, linked below.

Students on Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the [KU Academic Calendar](#) for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If at any time plans change and a student wishes to return and enroll before leave was supposed to end they may contact their department to be reactivated early.

#### **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [Leaves of Absence](#)
- [CLAS Leave of Absence Petition Form](#) (PDF)

### **Milestone Exams**

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

- Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for master's degree
- Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Exam
- Doctoral Final Exam/Dissertation Defense

Before a student is allowed to complete any of these three exams, pre-approval from the College is required in advance of the exam date. This pre-approval request will be submitted on your behalf by your program after the exam date has been scheduled. The College reviews the student record and verifies all University requirements have been fulfilled. The full list of these requirements may be found via the link in the heading above. Students should work with their program well in advance of their planned exam date, to schedule their exams in a timely fashion and to ensure that all University policies relating to oral exams are being followed.

There are additional policies requirements for oral exams. The following are University policies pertaining to oral exams:

#### *Oral Exam Committee Composition*

All voting committee members must be appointed members of the Graduate Faculty of KU. Additionally, a majority of committee members serving on a graduate student oral examination committee must be tenured/tenure-track faculty holding regular graduate faculty in the candidate's department or program of study.

Many additional restrictions apply, especially for doctoral exam committees. Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the University policies pertaining to exams, as well as consult with their Director when forming an exam committee. Your graduate program coordinator can assist with confirming the qualifying status of any faculty member at KU, or outside of KU.

### *Oral Exam Attendance*

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University-level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin. If a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the policies below, as well as consult with their Director in the formation of an oral exam committee.

#### **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Oral Exam Attendance](#)
- [Graduate Faculty Appointments](#)

### **Graduate Certificate Requirements**

The University offers a variety of [Approved Graduate Certificate Programs](#) to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate program requirements.

#### **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria](#)
- [Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

### **Graduation Requirements (M.A. & Ph.D.)**

In addition to all program requirements, students [planning to graduate](#) must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students

should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

### **COGA Graduation Checklists**

COGA's graduation checklists provide a comprehensive list of all University requirements for graduation and should be consulted by every graduating master's or doctoral student in the College as soon as graduation is expected. Submission of the final draft of the thesis or dissertation is done electronically. Students must comply with all University requirements for [formatting](#) and [electronic submission](#) of the thesis or dissertation. There is no University requirement that students provide a bound or printed copy of the draft.

### **“MY GRADUATION CHECKLIST” CANVAS COURSE**

If you are graduating with a Ph.D. or a thesis-option master's degree, you will submit documents and track the completion of your graduation requirements via your "My Graduation Checklist" site in Canvas. This site will be your online hub for all instructions and resources related to degree completion and graduation.

Your My Graduation Checklist Canvas site will be activated at one of these times, whichever comes first:

- On the 20th day of classes for students who have submitted an Application for Graduation via Enroll & Pay for that semester
- When your program submits your exam date and information for pre-approval
- During the week after the graduation deadline, for students who have applied to graduate for the upcoming semester

**We strongly encourage students to submit an Application for Graduation as early as possible, but at minimum prior to the 20th day of classes of the semester you want to graduate so that you can get access to the information and resources in your Graduation Checklist site as early as possible!**

If your Graduation Checklist has not been activated yet, you can utilize the Graduation checklists referenced above.

### **Graduate Studies Funding Opportunities**

The Office of Graduate Studies offers funding opportunities in several different categories. Students interested in applying should direct inquiries to their program Director or to the Office of Graduate Studies. Some of the available funding includes:

**Graduate Student Travel Fund:** Intended for graduate students presenting a paper at a national or regional meeting of a learned or professional society. A student may receive an award (max \$750)

only once per academic year, with priority given to students who have not received the fund previously. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.



## Appendices

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### Master's Program Checklist

Core Curriculum (3 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
ISP 800: Indigenous Issues in the United States			
Other Courses (18 hours) <i>Content relevant to Indigenous Studies; courses must be approved by Program Director and faculty advisor</i>			
Plan A: Non-Thesis Option Electives (9 hours)			
Plan B: Thesis Option Electives (6 hours)			
Plan B: Thesis Option Thesis Hours (3 hours)			
ISP 899: Master's Thesis			

If you would like to take a course but are unsure if it fulfills a program requirement, please speak with the Director of the program.

## Graduate Certificate Checklist

Core Curriculum (3 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
ISP 800: Indigenous Issues in the United States			
Other Courses (9 hours) 50% or more content in Indigenous Peoples; courses must be approved by ISP Executive Committee			

A list of approved courses that fulfill certificate course requirements can be found [here](#). If you would like to take a course, but are unsure if it fulfills a program requirement, please speak with your Advisor or the Director of the program.

## ISP MA/JD Coursework Checklist

Core Curriculum (3 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
ISP 800: Indigenous Issues in the United States			
Other Courses (12 hours) <i>Content relevant to Indigenous Studies; courses must be approved by Program Director and faculty advisor</i>			
Law Courses Counting Toward Area of Specialization (6 hours)			
Plan A: Non-Thesis Option Electives (6 hours from the Law School)			
Plan A: Non-Thesis Option Electives (3 hours outside the Law School)			
Plan B: Thesis Option Electives (6 hours from the Law School)			
Plan B: Thesis Option Thesis Hours (3 hours)			
ISP 899: Master's Thesis			

If you would like to take a course, but are unsure if it fulfills a program requirement, please speak with your Faculty Advisor or the Director of the program.

## Indigenous Studies Thesis & Portfolio Rubric

Each committee member will complete this rubric no later than 24 hours before the student's oral examination so that responses can be aggregated and provided to the committee chair(s). Responses are based on the student's written product(s).

An honors designation requires a majority (4 of 6) "advanced" responses.

1 or more "introductory" ratings typically constitute a fail. If the "introductory" ratings are unlikely to improve during the defense or through the implementation of post-defense revisions, the defense may be delayed or cancelled.

1. Learning Outcome 1: Exhibit an advanced level of knowledge in Indigenous scholarship and issues relevant to the field
  - a. Advanced (Outstanding – Excellent): Exhibits an advanced level of knowledge of Indigenous scholarship and issues relevant to the field
  - b. Intermediate (Very Good – Good): Exhibits an adequate level of knowledge of Indigenous scholarship and issues relevant to the field
  - c. Introductory (Marginal – Not Achieved): Exhibits a limited level of knowledge of Indigenous scholarship and issues relevant to the field
2. Learning Outcome 2: Demonstrate growth in engaging with a variety of culturally diverse perspectives, both in scholarship and practice
  - a. Advanced (Outstanding – Excellent): Engagement with culturally diverse perspectives in both scholarship and practice is strong and robust
  - b. Intermediate (Very Good – Good): Engagement with culturally diverse perspectives in both scholarship and practice is present and adequate
  - c. Introductory (Marginal – Not Achieved): Engagement with culturally diverse perspectives in both scholarship and practice is unproductive/insensitive
3. Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate interdisciplinary growth by establishing scholarly connections between Indigenous Studies and other fields of interest
  - a. Advanced (Outstanding – Excellent): Demonstrates interdisciplinary growth effectively and meaningfully by incorporating Indigenous perspectives with non-Indigenous Studies disciplines
  - b. Intermediate (Very Good – Good): Demonstrates interdisciplinary growth by adequately incorporating Indigenous perspectives with non-Indigenous Studies disciplines
  - c. Introductory (Marginal – Not Achieved): Minimal effort to engage in interdisciplinary growth
4. Learning Outcome 4: Communicate effectively through scholarly writing
  - a. Advanced (Outstanding – Excellent): Scholarly writing is original, clear, and of excellent quality

- b. Intermediate (Very Good – Good): Scholarly writing is original easily understood but requires minor revisions
  - Introductory (Marginal – Not Achieved): Writing is unclear and requires major revisions and/or plagiarism is present
- 5. Learning Outcome 5: Demonstrate an understanding of responsible and ethical practices for engaging with Indigenous communities when conducting research and scholarship
  - a. Advanced (Outstanding – Excellent): Demonstrates a strong and robust understanding of responsible and ethical Indigenous community engagement related to research and scholarship
  - b. Intermediate (Very Good – Good): Demonstrates an adequate understanding of responsible and ethical Indigenous community engagement related to research and scholarship
  - c. Introductory (Marginal – Not Achieved): Demonstrates a poor understanding of responsible and ethical Indigenous community engagement related to research and scholarship
- 6. Learning Outcome 6: Produce a valuable contribution to the field of Indigenous Studies (capstone experience - thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam)
  - a. Advanced (Outstanding – Excellent): Student contribution is strong and robust
  - b. Intermediate (Very Good – Good): Student contribution is adequate
  - c. Introductory (Marginal – Not Achieved): Student contribution is poor

## Internship Information

### Internship Process

#### Step 1: Prepare the Internship Contract

- Identify an ISP faculty member willing to supervise the internship. Your Faculty Supervisor will:
  - Assist you and the organization with which you will be working to develop proposed appropriate Internship Contract
  - Assign relevant preparatory and on-site readings
  - Suggest changes in work assignment if the internship is not meeting needs of the organization, ISP, or the student
  - Review final Internship Portfolio
  - Assign grade (A to F) in ISP 807
- Identify the potential host organization
- In conjunction with your Faculty Supervisor (the Faculty Supervisor may or may not be your Faculty Advisor), develop a proposed Internship Contract detailing the specific expectations, duties, and educational responsibilities that meet the requirements of the program and area of specialization (**Form: Internship Contract**)

#### Step 2: Faculty Supervisor Approval

- You must submit **Form: Internship Contract** to your Faculty Supervisor for their approval at least one month prior to the beginning of the internship
- Once approved, submit an electronic copy of the Internship Contract to the Graduate Academic Advisor
- Enroll in Faculty Supervisor's section of ISP 807. You may enroll in one to six hours of internship credit in ISP 807. The normal load is three or six credit hours. Each credit hour requires at least 60 contact hours.

#### Step 3: The Internship Experience

- Maintain close contact with your Faculty Supervisor to ensure that educational objectives are met, or changed, if necessary
- Immediately discuss any problems that arise with your Faculty Supervisor
- Conduct work in a professional manner
- Complete all assigned on-site readings

**Step 4:** Complete and submit required forms and documents upon completion of your internship hours. Electronic copies of all documents should be emailed to your Faculty Supervisor and the Graduate Academic Advisor.

#### 1. Forms

- Organization's Evaluation of Student Intern
- Student's Evaluation of Internship

## 2. Written Work

- *Weekly Journal and Portfolio:* The student must keep a personal weekly journal that describes and reflects on the internship experience. There is no predefined format for the journal; it may be hand written or kept electronically – the critical element is that it is kept regularly during the internship.
- *Final Report:* The student must critically evaluate the experience — be certain to include information concerning:
  - What you learned
  - What you would suggest changing in the internship experience, whether your experience related to your initial expectations
  - A discussion of the ways you were able or unable to apply theoretical classroom learning to practical applications
  - An assessment of how you incorporated principles listed on **Form: Ethics & Culture** in your internship experience

The length of the Final Report will vary according to number of credits received and should be discussed with your Faculty Supervisor. The average length is five to ten pages.

- *Work Completed During Internship:* Include copies of any work that you completed during your internship, such as reports, presentations, photos, policy analyses, etc. The final Internship Portfolio, or parts of it, may be appropriate to submit to prospective employers or to Ph.D. programs.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Am I responsible for finding an internship, or does ISP maintain a list of approved internship sites?**

At this time, you are responsible for securing your own internship, and for obtaining approval for the specific internship.

#### **In how many internship credit hours should I enroll?**

You may enroll in one to six hours of internship credit in ISP 807. The normal load is three or six credit hours. Each credit hour requires at least 60 contact hours. You may take all your credit hours in one semester or divide them into semesters, including the summer.

#### **Can I obtain credit for a paid internship?**

It is of no concern to the Program if the internship is paid or unpaid.

You can find the [internship forms](#) in the ISP Students Teams site