

Graduate Student Handbook

Academic Year 2026 - 2027

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
Mexican American Studies



MASTER'S PROGRAM

The Mexican American Studies (MAS) Master of Science Program is a dynamic, stimulating, and practical course of study that has been developed to advance the understanding of the large Mexican American and Latino populations in the United States. Three strands of coursework are available: Latina/o Health and Wellness; Historical and Cultural Studies; and Critical Education and Migration Studies. Once applicants are accepted into this unique postbaccalaureate program, they choose the strand best suited to their educational and professional goals, such as going on to a doctoral program, studying law, medicine, public health, or working in public- or private-sector organizations that serve the growing Latino populations.

The Master of Science in MAS is designed to be an applied degree. The concentration in Latino Health and Wellness prepares students to conduct culturally competent health research, and to develop health programs targeting Latinos. The Historical and Cultural Studies strand offers a concentration dealing with contemporary scholarship, theory, and methodology in anthropology and history. The concentration in Critical Education and Migration Studies provides students with the qualitative and quantitative background necessary to both understand and implement policies aimed at Mexican Americans and the communities they live in.

Learning Objectives

Students in the Master's program will be assessed in different milestones through out the program based on the following learning objectives:

1. The student can articulate and analyze Mexican American Chicanx/Latinx/Indigenous historic and contemporary issues, social movements, and related theories.
2. The student can apply Mexican American studies theories to think critically about social justice in the social context of Mexican American/Mexican origin communities.
3. The student can contextualize a hemispheric perspective which includes being able to incorporate frameworks for analyzing how structures, processes, and cultures within the political borders of the U.S. influence the rest of the hemisphere and the ways the rest of the hemisphere influences peoples and processes within the U.S.

Degree Requirements

A total of **33 units are required** for the Master of Science in Mexican American Studies.

A minimum of **6 core units, 21 elective units, and either 6 thesis units** (for the thesis option) or **6 additional elective units** (for the examination option) are required for completion of this degree. Students are required to select one concentration from the three strands available in the MS program. After consulting with a faculty advisor, graduate students must select 9 elective units from one of the three strand options.

MAS Master's Degree Program Overview

Core Courses (6 units/credits)
These courses are mandatory to enroll in for students in the MAS Master's program.

- MAS 508: The Mexican American - A Culture Perspective (3 units)
- MAS 580A: Advanced Research Methods (3 units)

Electives (21units/credits)
The courses taken under this section are to amplify the understanding and knowledge of the student to help identify their research interest for the program.

- MAS 505: Traditional Indian Medicine: Health, Health & Well-Being (3 units)
- MAS 509: Mexican Immigration (3 units)
- MAS 510: Socio-Cultural Determinants of Health (3 units)
- MAS 525: Latino Health Disparities (3 units)
- MAS 530: Latina/o Adolescence (3 units)
- MAS 560: Chicana/o Historiography Chicana/o Thought (3 units)
- MAS 566: Decolonial Theory (3 units)
- MAS 570: The Feminization of Migration - Global Perspective (3 units)
- MAS 575A: The Education of Latinas/Latinos
- MAS 585: Mexicana/Chicana Women's History

Look for courses taught by MAS core faculty, affiliated faculty and courses offered in the following departments:

- Anthropology
- College of Public Health
- Gender & Women's Studies
- History
- Language, Reading & Cultures
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Spanish & Portuguese
- Teacher and Teacher Education

Elective options offered by other departments are under the exclusive control of that department. They can be cancelled, changed, or restricted at any time. Their inclusion in the MAS pre-approved elective list does not guarantee MAS students access to these classes but indicates we will accept them as electives toward the MS degree. These courses are difficult to get in to due to MPH program enrollment restrictions. Dual degree program students may not experience registration restrictions on these courses.

Thesis or Additional Elective Units (6 units/credits)
Based on the option the student chooses to complete the Master's program will inform which option to choose below:

- Thesis Paper Option: Students choosing to complete a thesis will enroll in 6 units of MAS 910 (thesis coursework).
- Oral Exam Option: Students choosing to complete an oral examination will enroll in 6 additional elective units.

***All Students will take MAS 508 their first semester in the graduate program**
***Students who have taken any co-convened courses during their undergraduate studies cannot count credit toward the graduate degree. See your Advisor for substitution options.**

Students have the option of completing a thesis or taking a combination of oral and written exams to demonstrate their Master's-level proficiency. Prior to initiating the second year of graduate study, or at the completion of eighteen units, students are required to declare whether they will select the thesis or the examination option. Students should select their course of study as early as possible to begin preparing their thesis work or examination papers from their first semester of study. Students who change options after taking steps toward one-degree completion course of study will be required to complete all of the requirements of their newly selected course of study, even at the cost of additional academic units and time. Students have six years to complete all Master of Science coursework, including transfer credits or credits taken as a non-degree-seeking student.

Independent/Internship Units

Students may also receive credit for independent study and/or unpaid internships under the guidance of a faculty member approved by the DGS. **Any independent study units or internships that will count toward the 33 total Master's degree units must be approved in advance by the DGS and your advisor.** A total of no more than six (6) units of independent study and/or internship credits may be applied toward the Master's degree and require a completed independent study and/or internship form signed and approved prior to registering for the class. Please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator regarding any independent study or internship credits you would like to pursue.

Students will not be allowed to register for independent studies/internships when core courses have not been completed and are being offered.

Course Substitutions

Substitutions for core courses are generally not permitted and are approved only in rare circumstances by the DGS and the Graduate Program Coordinator. Those students who have previously taken MAS 425 cannot count MAS 525 toward their master's degree. Any substitution of strand electives must first be approved by the DGS and the Graduate Program Coordinator. All course substitutions, including independent study classes and internships, must be cleared by the Major Advisor and the Graduate Program Coordinator at the time of registration for classes.
Please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator to obtain a Petition for Course Substitution.

Thesis Option or Oral Examination Option

Option 1: Thesis Paper Option

When a student selects the thesis option, a thesis is required for completion of the M.S. degree. **By the end of the second semester or before the nineteenth unit of graduate study**, students on the thesis option must identify their thesis advisor, which must be a MAS core faculty member. The student will submit a "prospectus" to the thesis advisor and will outline academic progress to date, those studies to be completed prior to writing the thesis and an outline of the research to be included in the thesis. The student then meets with his/her advisor to discuss the prospectus. The Director of Graduate Studies reviews this information and helps the candidate to formulate any new plans, if appropriate.

Student Accommodations for Examination or Course Work

If you need accommodations or extended time on the Thesis Paper or the Oral Examination please speak with your advisor or the Graduate Coordinator prior to the date of examination or due date.

You can also consult the the University of Arizona Disability Resource Center for more information and services.

More information on page 11.

Establishing Your Committee

Master's thesis committees must consist of three members; at least two must be tenure-track MAS faculty members. If the third member is not a tenure-track UA faculty member, they must be approved by the Graduate College as a special member. *Connect with your Advisor and the Program Coordinator to submit a request to the Graduate College.*

A member who is not tenure-track will not be eligible to serve as sole chair of the committee but can serve as co-chair if approved to do so by the Graduate College. The student works with the faculty advisor to determine the additional two faculty members who will serve as secondary members.

Changes to Committee Members

Establishing your committee is very important to ensure you have the support necessary at every milestone. Changes in your committee can results in significant impacts before, during or after the Thesis or Oral examination. The Graduate College requires specific information regarding any changes in to the Thesis or Oral Examination Committee.

Students should consult with their advisor before submitting the **Change of MA Committee Form**. To submit the report, you will need to provide a reasoning to request the change that must be approved by your Advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies.

Note: Students with outstanding incomplete(s) will not be allowed to defend their thesis.

Preparation of the written thesis must follow Graduate College regulations. See the Graduate College webpage for the manual for submission of paper or electronic theses. Even if the student does not wish to submit their thesis for publication, they must meet Graduate College guidelines for submission of their thesis to the MAS department. The thesis must be approved by advisor before being sent to the committee. Once the thesis has been approved by advisor, the student submits a completed copy of the rough draft to their student advisor and committee at least one month prior to the end of the academic term in which they are graduating. The committee members will individually review the thesis and return it to the student with comments and corrections.

After addressing comments on the thesis from the Major Advisor and committee, the student will arrange a time and location to defend the thesis before the committee and other invitees.

Recommend: Prepare a 15 minute PowerPoint presentation that addresses the key theories, methods and findings of the thesis. Reminder-the student will be evaluated on the MAS learning objectives.

Upon successful oral defense of the thesis and obtaining approval from the committee for the final version of the thesis, the student moves to prepare a final draft. One copy of the final draft must be delivered to the Graduate Program Coordinator. The Department must receive a final copy of the student's thesis upon completion of their program.

Option 2: Oral Examination Option

When a student selects the oral examination option, they will submit three 15-page papers written during the course of their graduate studies and respond satisfactorily to a series of oral questions prepared by the examination committee to meet the requirements of the M.S. degree. Prior to initiating the second year or the nineteenth unit of graduate study, M.S. students who choose the examination option must identify their examination advisor. The student and advisor will work together to formulate a committee consisting of at least three members who will support the student through the examination process. Two of the three papers must be from MAS core courses, and the papers must have been written for classes taught by at least two of the faculty members serving on the committee. The papers cannot all have been written for the same faculty member. The student must have received a grade of A or B on each paper to qualify for submission to the examination committee.

Note: Students with outstanding incomplete(s) will not be allowed to take their oral exam.

The oral examination guidelines are as follows:

- Students must submit three (3) papers written and graded in at least two MAS core courses and one MAS elective course.
- Each paper should be at least 10 pages in length or equivalent, or at the discretion of the student's faculty advisor.
- The student must provide all three papers to each oral exam committee member at least three weeks prior to the date of the oral exam.
- The student must provide the Plan of Study to their exam committee at least three weeks prior to the date of the oral exam.

Oral exam questions on course content are allowable, but the student must be provided these questions at least one week prior to the date of the oral exam.

The oral exam will be at least 60 minutes in length but will not exceed 90 minutes.

- In the first portion of the oral exam the student will present and discuss each paper. We recommend that the student prepared a 15-20 minute PowerPoint presentation that articulates key ideas and theories of each paper.
- In the second portion of the oral exam the oral exam committee will commence with their questions. Three (3) oral exam questions will be taken from each of the papers submitted. The student will receive six of the questions at least one week prior to the oral exam date and three questions in the oral exam. Thus, there will be a total of 9 questions the student must answer. *Reminder: the student will be evaluated on MAS learning objectives.*

The student will be notified of she/he passed, failed, or needs to revise at the end of the examination. The student will have two weeks to revise their answers, which will be assessed by the student's oral exam committee chair. The chair will have the final say on the matter.

The student has one opportunity within one semester's time to re-take a failed oral examination. The student's three papers will be maintained on file at the Mexican American Studies Graduate Program upon successful completion of the master's degree requirements.

MAS Satisfactory Academic Policy

Students pursuing the Master of Science Degree in Mexican American Studies are required to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress toward degree completion. Satisfactory academic progress includes: maintaining a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 each semester of enrollment, and; enrolling in a minimum of 3 units per semester if a part-time student; or enrolling in a minimum of 6 units per semester if full-time. Additionally, part-time students must complete all degree requirements within 6 years of enrollment in the program. Further, all core courses for the degree should be completed within the first five (5) semesters of enrollment for part-time students, and within the first three (3) semesters of enrollment for full-time students. When a student fails to achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 or does not demonstrate satisfactory academic progress as defined above, the department will proceed to disqualify them from the program. The student can then apply as non-degree-seeking.

Transfer Credit

No more than 20% of the minimum number of units required for a Master's degree can be transferred from other accredited institutions. Credits being considered for transfer cannot be older than 6 years. Such transfer credit can be applied to an advanced degree only upon satisfactory completion of deficiencies as prescribed by the head of the major department in which the student seeks a degree. Transfer of credit toward an advanced degree will not be made unless the grade earned was A or B, and unless it was awarded graduate credit at the institution where the work was completed. Grades of transfer work will not be used in computing the student's grade-point average.

Students who wish transfer credit must submit an 'Evaluation of Transfer Credit' form before the end of their first year of study. Coursework taken outside this department requires a copy of the syllabus be provided for the class under consideration. Approval from both the student's advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to substantiate the relevance of any transfer units is required. Forms are available from the Academic Coordinator. This form must be approved by the Graduate College via GradPath.

Master's Continuous Enrollment Policy

A student admitted to a master's degree program must register each Fall and Spring semester for a minimum of 3 graduate units from original matriculation until all degree requirements are met.

Master's students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements and were enrolled in the prior semester may defend and file in the summer or winter term without registration. If, however, a student needs library privileges or if they plan to make other use of University facilities or significant faculty time during summer or winter session, enrollment is required.

All graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment in the University of Arizona Graduate College. A student admitted to a graduate degree program must register each fall and spring semester for a minimum of 3 graduate units from original matriculation until all degree requirements, including submission of the final copy of the thesis is completed, unless excused through a leave of absence (See Leave of Absence Policy, below). Students who fail to keep continuous enrollment will need to re-apply to the program.

Students receiving teaching or research assistantships must register for a minimum of 6 units per semester. Graduate students do not have to register for graduate units during summer sessions unless they plan to make use of University of Arizona facilities or faculty time. If they plan to utilize facilities or faculty time, they must enroll for at least 1 unit of graduate credit in any summer session. If degree requirements are completed during the summer term, the student must also be registered for a minimum of 1 unit of graduate credit during that term. If degree requirements are completed during an inter-session (winter session or the Pre-Session), the student must have been registered during the preceding semester. Students that fail to keep continuous enrollment must re-apply for admission if they wish to continue the Master of Science program. Please refer to the Graduate College website and catalog for details on fulfilling full-time enrollment.

All graduate students must demonstrate satisfactory progress toward their Master of Science Degree. Students will be placed on probation if GPA falls below 3.0.

MAS Master's Degree Checklist

The Master's program is a standard two-year program. While faculty and staff will help you to successfully earn your M.S., you are ultimately responsible for making sure that you meet all requirements and deadlines for both the department and the Graduate College.

☐ **1. Select your Advisor by December 1**
Notify the DGS and the Graduate Program Coordinator whether you will keep the provisional advisors or have you selected a different advisor.

☐ **2. Master's Plan of Study (due 2nd semester in residence)**
https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/degree-requirements/masters-degrees#plan-of-study
The Plan of Study identifies (1) courses the student intends to transfer from other institutions; (2) courses already completed at The University of Arizona which the student intends to apply toward the graduate degree; and (3) additional course work to be completed to fulfill degree requirements. The Plan of Study must have the approval of the student's major professor and Department Head or DGS before it is submitted to the Graduate College. You will work with your advisor to create the Plan of Study. There is a Plan of Study fee.

☐ **3. Select Thesis or Examination Option (due by the end of the 2nd semester)**
Notify the DGS and the Graduate Program Coordinator whether you will select the Thesis or the Examination Option. Students who change options after taking steps toward on degree completion course of study will be required to complete all of the requirements of their newly selected course of study, even at the cost of additional academic units and time. See
Masters Committee Form.

☐ **4. Completion of Degree Requirements (due the week after finals end, earlier if you need special verification that your requirements have been completed)**
When the student's department determines that the student has completed all degree requirements, a Completion of master's degree Requirements form signed by the three faculty members of the student's committee (two of whom must be tenure-track faculty members in the major field) will be submitted to the Graduate College. Approval of this form by the Dean of the Graduate College will certify completion of degree requirements. Modifications to the Plan of Study may be made on the Completion of Degree Requirement form or on the Changes in Student's Records form. Modifications may consist of changes in coursework, changes in addresses, or changes in names. Name changes also require that an official name change be filed with the Registrar's Office. All outstanding fees must be cleared before the final completion date. Any financial encumbrances will delay mailing of the diploma and transcripts. All grades must be submitted for Incompletes and current semester coursework must be received before the degree is considered completed. A student must be in good academic standing at the time of submission of the Completion of master's degree Requirements form.

Master's Guide to GradPath Forms

All forms are electronic and can be found on GradPath

1. **Responsible Conduct of Research Form** – Must be completed at beginning of program. No other forms will be available until this has been completed.
2. **Evaluation of Transfer Credits** - only if using external transfer courses. Must be provided to advisor no later than the end of your second semester.
3. **Plan of Study** – Due no later than the end of your second semester. Please note there are fees associated with submitting the form.
4. **Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form** – Must be completed whether you are choosing the thesis option or the oral exam option. Due by the beginning of the semester in which you are defending your or thesis or taking your oral exam. Submit as soon as the Plan of Study has been approved and it is required whether or not you formed a committee.
5. **Master's/Specialist Completion Confirmation Form** - this form is submitted by the department Graduate Program Coordinator on behalf of the student to initiate final Graduate College degree audit.
6. **Submission of thesis for archiving** - required if student completes a thesis
7. **Exit Survey** - At the time of a graduate student's completion of their program, all students must participate in an exit survey regarding their learning experience in the department.

Recommended Last Date for Oral Examination/Thesis Defense

Graduation Term	Deadline Dates
Summer 2026 |	Final approved thesis submission, and all degree requirements by **August 24, 2026.**
Fall 2026 |	Final approved thesis submission, and all degree requirements by **December 07, 2026.**
Winter 2026 |	Final approved thesis submission, and all degree requirements by **January 12, 2027.**
Spring 2027 |	Final approved thesis submission, and all degree requirements by **TBD.**

***Last date to submit thesis to the Graduate College. Please note that all coursework, reports & all other degree requirements must be completed by the conferral date for the term.*

ACADEMIC YEAR 1 | 1st & 2nd Semester

FALL SEMESTER

What students need to accomplish:

- [ ] Student Identifies MAS Advisor
- [ ] Submit "Plan of Study" on GradPath
- [ ] Identify Path: Thesis Paper or Oral Exam
- [ ] Research/Paper:
  - Thesis Paper - start data collection, writing draft with support of advisor
  - Oral Exam - work with Advisor to identify from which courses you will pull your three (3) papers from

Courses to register for:

- MAS 508 The Mexican-American: A Cultural Perspective (Mandatory Requirement)
- Register in other MAS Elective Courses.

  To stay on schedule, we recommend in enrolling in 9 elective units (3 courses)

SPRING SEMESTER

What students need to accomplish:

- [ ] Submit IRB with support of Advisor
- [ ] Identify MAS Core Committee members, outside members, and/or community partners
- [ ] Identify date for Thesis Defense or Oral Exam

Courses to register for:

- MAS 580A Advanced Research Methods (Mandatory Requirement)
- Register in other MAS Elective Courses.

  To stay on schedule, we recommend in enrolling in 9 elective units (3 courses)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2| 3rd & 4th Semester

THESIS PAPER OPTION

FALL SEMESTER

What students need to accomplish:

- [ ] Complete any remaining Coursework units
- [ ] Send drafts to Advisor & Committee
- [ ] Finalize Thesis Defense Date & Location

Courses to register for:

- Register in any remaining coursework/elective units
- Can request to register in Thesis Units

SPRING SEMESTER

What students need to accomplish:

- [ ] Confirm submission and acceptance of "Plan of Study"
- [ ] Submit "Appointment Form" on GradPath
- [ ] Complete edits provided by committee
- [ ] Submit Master's Thesis to Graduate College
- [ ] Register for Graduation/Commencement

Courses to register for:

- Register in Thesis Units

ORAL EXAM OPTION

FALL SEMESTER

What students need to accomplish:

- [ ] Complete any remaining Coursework units
- [ ] Finalize the three (3) papers & send to committee
- [ ] Finalize Oral Exam Date & Location

Courses to register for:

- Register in any remaining coursework/elective units
- Instead of Thesis Units, register in six (6) additional elective units

SPRING SEMESTER

What students need to accomplish:

- [ ] Confirm submission and acceptance of "Plan of Study"
- [ ] Submit "Appointment Form" on GradPath
- [ ] Register for Graduation/Commencement

Courses to register for:

- Register in remaining elective units