Frequently Asked Questions about the Master of Science in Cultural Foundations of Community Engagement and Education Exit Requirements

Congratulations on nearing the final requirements for your degree. You must successfully complete the capstone requirement to demonstrate your ability to integrate your knowledge of the subject matter with which you engaged through the Educational Policy and Community Studies Department for the completion of your Master of Science degree. The most common way to achieve this is to complete and defend a final paper or final paper/project, but you may also choose to complete and defend a formal master’s thesis. After you submit your graduation application to the graduate school, the graduate representative will work with you to identify an appropriate chair and second reader for you. Ideally, your chair will be a faculty member with whom you worked closely through your coursework. Your master’s committee does not need to include your assigned faculty advisor given to you in the PAWS system. Many of our students do interdisciplinary work and take classes from other departments and schools – your chair must be from the EDPOL department. Our faculty serve on multiple committees, and your top choice may not be available to serve on yours.

Your chair will guide you through the process of completing this assignment, but here is some general information:

Final Paper Option

The final paper can be an original paper based on your interests or it could be an expansion of a paper you completed in your of your classes. After you have identified a faculty member to serve as your chair, she or he will work closely with you to create a plan for its completion. This paper will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of a subject area in which you are interested, and will highlight your ability to critically analyze texts, synthesize arguments, and write in a clear and coherent manner. You may be asked to conduct an in-depth literature review on a particular topic, or conduct original research. At a minimum, your paper must be 25 pages long and include at least 15-20 references. All papers must meet APA guidelines.

Your chair will determine whether or not your paper meets sufficient depth for a capstone master’s paper. You may need to write several drafts of your paper before it ready for submission to your full committee. After your draft is near completion, your chair may ask you to submit it to your second reader, or she or he may do this for you. After the second reader has read the paper, the chair, the second reader and you will schedule an exit interview. During this interview, the three of you will discuss your paper, and the faculty will ask you some general questions about your experiences in our department. You may be asked to make additional changes to your paper during the defense.
After your paper is accepted by your chair and second reader, you will be conferred the degree of Master of Science in Cultural Foundations of Education. You will provide one electronic copy of your paper to your committee members and the Graduate Representative. Your chair will then alert the department Graduate Representative that all requirements have been met.

**Thesis Option**

A thesis represents a much more substantial research project that is submitted formally to the Graduate School. Students pursuing the thesis option may take up to 6 credits of Ed Pol 990 Research or Thesis. The master’s thesis option is appropriate for those students who plan to pursue doctoral-level work after the completion of their master’s degree. Discuss this option with your chair to see if it is appropriate for you. If you choose this option, you must formally register your committee with the graduate school *in advance* of its conception and completion. This includes your chair, and one or two additional readers. As in the final paper option, you will meet with your committee for an exit interview, and after your thesis is approved, you will submit your final thesis through the UWM Proquest system. The guidelines for the thesis are included here:


http://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=449

**Final Paper/Project option**

Students choosing the Paper/Project option are required to take Ed Pol 791 Action Research: Capstone Workshop (3 credits) in the second to last or last semester of the program. The student must also choose a second reader as content advisor. The instructor in Ed Pol 791 will support the student in the completion of the Project/Paper to meet the content advisor's guidelines. Students may choose to complete either an action research project with a written research component or a research paper. EDPOL 791 may not be offered as a class every semester.

**Timing/Administration Requirements**

When most of your coursework is near completion or has been completed, and you have a plan for writing your final paper, you will submit your application for intent to graduate for the semester in which you plan to graduate to the Graduate School. There is a non-refundable $40 fee that is billed by the Bursar’s Office for applying. Go to the following link for the application:

http://graduateschool.uwm.edu/forms-and-downloads/students/grad_masters_app.cfm

The deadline for applying is usually prior to or at the beginning of that semester -- see the deadlines for application online: http://graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/current/graduation/deadlines/
Note that your exit interview must be completed approximately two weeks before the end of the semester and the final paper or master’s thesis must be successfully completed and submitted at least one week before the graduation date for that semester. Refer to the calendar in the link above for exact dates.

Some students complete their capstone requirement during the time in which they are enrolled in their final courses. Others complete their final paper or master’s thesis after they have completed coursework. You must be enrolled in at least one credit during the semester in which you plan to graduate, so you must enroll in a one-credit independent study with your chair during the semester in which you plan to graduate if you have already completed all other courses.

If you are not successful in completing your final paper or thesis during the semester in which you submitted your formal intent to graduate, you must still pay all fees associated with that semester, including the one credit in which you may have enrolled. You must reapply for graduation by submitting a new application for your intent to apply for a future semester, and then pay all fees associated with that semester, including the one-credit independent study, if appropriate, and the $40 application fee.

Here is the link for the full list of requirements for the Cultural Foundations of Community Engagement and Education Master of Science degree:
http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/prospective/areas-of-study/cultural-foundations-of-education/

For complete information about graduation requirements, consult the UWM Graduate School webpage on Graduation Procedures:
http://graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/current/graduation/

Helpful Hints

- Consider the topics you might be interested in pursuing for your final paper or master’s thesis while you are still enrolled in courses.
- Visit the UWM Writer’s Center for help with basic paper structure and proofreading assistance. Familiarize yourself with APA Manual of Style.
- Connect with our faculty about serving as chairs, second readers, and mentors for you.

Our faculty wish you success in completing your final capstone requirement for the Master of Science degree! Please do not hesitate to contact your faculty advisor or the Graduate Representative if you have any questions about these requirements.