

Academic Policies and Procedures

It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the academic rules and regulations in this Catalog and with departmental and program policies concerning the student's degree program. These provisions are subject to change, although students will normally be permitted to complete their programs under the regulations in effect at the time of admission.

Advisement

Advisement procedures and arrangements vary between programs, but generally, the program coordinator will assign a faculty advisor to work with each student to develop an approved program of study. Special, non-degree seeking students are advised by program coordinators for the curricula in which they are seeking admission to classes. Students must be advised each semester before enrolling. Some programs use BOSS to require advising, while others do it in a more informal manner.

Falsifying the Graduate Admissions Application

UALR expects members of the university committee, including applicants for admission, to be honest and professional in all of their dealings with the institution. In order to evaluate the credentials of an applicant, the Graduate School requires a portfolio of accurate information about the applicant's academic, professional, and personal history. The Graduate School will take action against applicants who deliberately lie or misrepresent their background in their application materials.

If the false, misrepresented, or misleading information on the application portfolio is discovered:

Before the application process is complete: the application will not be processed and no admission offer will be forthcoming.

After admission and prior to enrollment: the admission offer will be rescinded.

After admission and enrollment: the student will be administratively withdrawn from all classes and dismissed from the Graduate School; institutional financial assistance will be terminated retroactively and all other awards made to the student must be repaid

After a degree or certificate has been earned: that degree or certificate will be revoked

Under none of these circumstances will the applicant receive a refund of his / her application fee or tuition and fees. Evidence suggesting that an applicant has lied, misrepresented, or acted to mislead reviewers with respect to any component of the applicant's background will be brought to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School will evaluate the relevant evidence and consult with any parties involved with the application prior to making a decision regarding the disposition of the application. If the applicant/student/graduate wishes to appeal the decision, an appeal may be made to the Associate Dean of Students, after which instructional student appeals processes will be implemented. No punitive action against the applicant/student/graduate will occur until the issue is resolved.

Standard English Requirement

Except in certain foreign language programs, Standard American English (SAE) is the language of instruction, examination, and all other forms of professional communication within graduate education at UALR. Only when communication in another language or in non-standard English is essential to the integrity of the academic process may a thesis / dissertation, major programmatic examination, or other component of the academic process be conducted in a language other than SAE. Students who wish to use a language other than SAE must secure the written permission of the Dean of the Graduate School. When a thesis / dissertation is accepted in a different language, it must contain an abstract written in SAE.

Sufficient proficiency in SAE speech and writing is expected of all graduate students. Minimum proficiency levels are defined in the English Proficiency Certification paragraph in the International Student section of the Graduate Catalog.

Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate proficiency. The preferred method of demonstrating English proficiency is the TOEFL examination or IELTS. However, the Graduate School may approve other recognized tests on a case by case basis. Each academic unit may reserve the right to require students to have greater proficiency than the minimum standards described in the Graduate Catalog, to pass a written English proficiency exam given during their first academic year at UALR, and / or secure remedial instruction if necessary. For an applicant whose first language is not English, but who does have a degree from a regionally -- accredited U.S. institution of higher education, the requirement for demonstrated proficiency in English may be waived. Some units may require knowledge of one or more foreign languages for advanced degrees. For information, the student should contact the program of interest.

Registration and Enrollment

UALR's registration information is posted online on the BOSS website at <https://boss.ualr.edu>

Course Attendance

All graduate students at UALR are expected to attend classes regularly. Each faculty member has the right to establish requirements for attendance and participation unique to each of his / her courses. Course requirements (e.g., homework assignments, examinations, oral presentations, laboratory experiments / reports, participation in discussion, etc.) are not waived due to absence from class. Instructors may establish the academic consequences, including course failure, of excessive absences.

When students will be away from class for reasons of health, family matters, or other personal or professional reasons, the student should inform the instructor at his / her earliest opportunity. The student and the instructor should discuss whether and how missed work can be made up, how the absences may affect the grade, and other academic issues.

Course Audit

To audit a course means to attend class with no expectation of active involvement in class activities and, in effect, to be a spectator, not a participant. Under normal circumstances, the auditing student will not be given a grade, performance report, or evaluation of any kind. However, to receive transcript recognition for the audited course, the student must attend class with sufficient regularity to meet the instructors's minimum expectations. These expectations should be made explicit to the student early in the course. Students who audit a course must follow regular admission and registration procedures, pay full tuition and fees, and are subject to the University's academic policies. Credit accrued through audited courses do not count toward fulfilling minimum credit degree requirements. In addition, audited courses do not count toward those needed to meet the requirements for a full - or half - time graduate assistantship. Graduate students should contact UALR Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (501-569-3127) to determine the impacts of auditing a course on financial aid.

Course Load

A full-time graduate student must be enrolled for a minimum of nine credit hours per semester. A three-quarter-time graduate student must be enrolled in seven or eight hours per semester. A half-time graduate student must be enrolled in five or six hours per semester. Graduate course load for summer terms are: full-time, five hours or more; three-quarter-time, four hours; and half-time, three hours.

A student involved in equivalent academic endeavors, such as approved research projects or thesis writing, may request that the Graduate School Dean certify full- or part-time status. Students must have the Graduate School Dean's permission to enroll in more than 15 hours in one semester.

Schedule Changes

UALR's schedule change procedures and deadlines are available on BOSS at <https://www.boss.ualr.edu>. Adding or dropping a course, transferring from one section to another, changing credit status in a course, or changing any other schedule must be approved by the graduate program coordinator.

Undergraduate Students in Graduate Courses

Undergraduate UALR students may enroll in up to 6 hours of graduate courses if they are within 15 hours of completing graduation requirements, have a 3.0 GPA, and have the approval of the program coordinator or appropriate department representative, course instructor, and the Graduate School Dean. These courses may be used to satisfy baccalaureate degree requirements, subject to approval of the undergraduate major advisor, or they may be reserved for credit in a graduate program. The request form is available from the Graduate School or program coordinator and must be completed before registration.

Transfer of Credit

Graduate credit may be granted for equivalent course work from other institutions with approval of the appropriate program coordinator and the Graduate School Dean. Such credit may not exceed one half of the program requirements, exclusive of thesis or other exit project credits; must be no more than five-years-old; and must have a letter grade of B or better.

Courses without letter grades (graded credit, satisfactory, pass) must be accompanied by official evidence that such grades equated to a B or better at the institution at which they were earned. Accredited graduate programs usually accept transfer credits only from similarly accredited programs. Correspondence courses are not accepted for graduate credit. (Also see Workshop Credit Limits" below.)

Transfer grades are not computed as part of a student's GPA.

Individual programs may accept fewer transfer hours than the Graduate School. Decisions on credit transfer are normally made and recorded immediately after the student has been admitted. Credits accepted for transfer will be posted when the student's Application for Transfer Credit has been approved and forwarded by the Graduate School Dean.

Courses and Credits

Courses with 5000-level numbers are dual-listed (4000/5000) for both undergraduate and graduate credit. That is, each 5000-level graduate course has a parallel 4000-level undergraduate course. UALR students who have completed a 4000-level class as part of a baccalaureate degree cannot receive credit toward a graduate degree by enrolling in the dual 5000-level course. Courses with numbers 7000 or above are designated exclusively for graduate students. Numbers 1000-4999 (undergraduate courses) and 6000 (UALR Law School program courses) are not in this Catalog. For all UALR course numbers, the second digit indicates the number of credit hours earned for the course.

Credit Limits

For most programs, no more than 40 percent of a program's required minimum credit hours may be earned in 5000-level courses. For example, if a program requires a minimum of 30 hours, no more than 12 hours may be 5000-level and at least 18 hours must be 7000 or above. Individual programs may allow fewer 5000-level hours than the Graduate School.

Independent Study Courses

The Graduate School reserves the right to question and restrict the number of independent or directed study courses applied to graduation requirements. Individual programs may limit the number of such hours credited toward the degree.

Non-program Graduate Courses

A number of UALR departments that do not offer graduate programs offer one or more graduate courses that may serve as electives in other departments' programs. Students wishing to apply such course credits to a degree program at UALR or elsewhere, should contact program officials in advance to find out whether the course is appropriate to the contemplated degree program.

Courses Applied Toward Two Degrees

Generally, credits earned to satisfy the minimum requirements of one graduate degree may not be counted toward a second graduate degree. However, if two graduate programs require the same or similar courses, a student who has completed one of the degrees or is concurrently pursuing both degrees (such as two master's degrees) may, with approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, request an exception to the general rule. Exceptions may not authorize duplicate credit for more than 12 hours or result in a combined total of less than 60 graduate hours for two UALR master's degrees. Similarly, exceptions may not include courses required in the prerequisite master's degree for admission to a doctoral program.

The concurrent Master of Business Administration/Juris Doctorate degree program is offered through the UALR College of Business Administration in conjunction with the UALR School of Law. The program allows students to earn MBA and JD degrees concurrently with less time and fewer credit hours. Contact the business administration program coordinator for more information.

The Master of Public Administration degree can also be earned in conjunction with the Juris Doctorate degree. The program allows students to earn MPA and JD degrees concurrently with less time and fewer credit hours. Contact the public administration program coordinator for more information.

Workshop Credit Limits

No more than six credit hours in workshop courses, approved by the program coordinator and Graduate School Dean, may be counted toward degree requirements. Individual programs may accept fewer hours. Credit earned at virtual universities and for-profit universities will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Grades and Grading Policies

The graduate grading system used by UALR is: A, excellent; B, acceptable; C and D, below acceptable standards; F, failure; I, incomplete; IP, in progress, CR/NC, credit/no credit; AU, audit; and W, withdrawal. The Graduate School uses the grade point average (GPA) for the program in which the student is currently enrolled and any other course taken while enrolled in the current program as the standard measure for retention and graduation requirements. The GPA is determined by assigning quality points to each letter grade (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0), multiplying by the number of credit hours in the course, and dividing by the total number of hours attempted. The semester grade report shows both the semester GPA and a cumulative GPA based on all graduate work taken at UALR.

If grades are posted, it is done in such a way that students can identify only their own grades. Students in debt to the University will not receive a semester grade report until the debt is satisfied. A formal process to appeal a final grade decision is found online at <http://www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/handbook.html> and as described in the UALR Student Handbook.

Repeated Courses

Only under extraordinary circumstances will be allowed to repeat a course in which he / she has earned a grade of C or less and then only with the written recommendation of the appropriate departmental chairperson or program director, school director or college dean, and final approval by the Graduate Dean. Each subsequent course repeat must be approved separately. If there have been changes in course numbers or titles, the student must first obtain the approval of the chairperson of the department offering the course to be assured it is an identical course.

When a graduate course is repeated, the first grade remains part of the record and is computed in the final graduate GPA. Degree credit will only be granted for the course once, and that will only occur if the repeated course grade is a C or better (i.e., a student will lose all degree credit for the course if the repeated course grade is an F). Once a degree has been awarded, no requests to repeat a course will be accepted.

Academic Probation

Graduate students who do not maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA (B average) on all courses in their program are on academic probation at the end of the semester, regardless of whether or not they receive notification. Students who fail to remove the probationary status by raising their GPAs during their next enrollment periods or whose GPA cannot be raised to 3.0 or better within 12 credit hours are subject to dismissal from the Graduate School. For part-time students, "next enrollment period" may, if approved by the program coordinator, be defined as the next 12 hours. Note: Some programs may have higher GPA or course program performance requirements.

In Progress (IP) Grade

An In Progress grade (IP) is used for classes such as thesis, dissertation, and other similar classes that have a time obligation that is longer than the traditional semester or session. IP indicates that the student is making satisfactory progress in that class. Students who do not make satisfactory progress will be granted no credit. The instructor assigning the IP grade will replace it by a letter grade that reflects the quality of the finished work. In unusual circumstances, such as a student not finishing the obligation in a length of time deemed reasonable by the professor or the professor assigning the grade being unable to change the grade, the graduate coordinator, after consulting with the Graduate School Dean, may change the grade to CR in the CR/NC scheme or A-C in the A-F scheme. The IP grade is distinct and different from the Incomplete (I) grade. The IP grade is not calculated into the grade point average. IP grades will be administratively converted to CR or A-C, as described above, after six years have elapsed.

Incompletes and Withdrawals

Incompletes and withdrawals are viewed unfavorably by the graduate faculty, graduate dean, and prospective employers. An incomplete (I) grade must be requested by the student and is given when the instructor deems that circumstances beyond the student's control prevented timely completion of course requirements. An instructor does not give an incomplete (I) grade to a student who stops attending class without prior instructor approval or who fails to earn a passing grade during the course of the semester term. A written contract, signed by the instructor and student, sets the date and condition for completing the class. Most I grades can be removed within

90 days; all must be removed within one year, or these grades are converted to F's. Students with excessive incompletes may be restricted in the number of hours they may take in a subsequent semester.

A withdrawal (W) is recorded when a student drops a course after about the first week of classes or withdraws from all University course work during a semester. A pattern of class or semester withdrawals can indicate unsatisfactory progress and may lead to dismissal from the graduate program or Graduate School. (See also "Academic Probation," "Schedule Changes," and "Withdrawal from the University" in this section of the *Catalog*).

Transcript Policies

- UALR transcripts are issued from the Office of Records and Registration only at the request of the student.
- No transcript or other evidence of attendance is issued to or for a student who is in debt to the University.
- Each transcript includes the student's complete record at UALR.
- Transcript requests must be made at least one week before the desired date of issue.
- A small fee is charged for each transcript issued. Contact the Cashier's Office at <http://online.ualr.edu/ofs/cs.html>.
- Transcripts presented for admission or evaluation of credit become part of the student's permanent record and are not reissued.
- Transcripts from another institution must be sent to UALR directly from that institution.

Graduate Student Responsibilities

Graduate students are responsible for all aspects of their academic progress and for being familiar with UALR's graduate education policies and procedures at the programmatic, departmental, college, and university levels. These include, but are not limited to academic requirements, timetables and important dates, and important dates, and research compliance and integrity issues.

These requirements may be communicated in a variety of fashions, including:

- the UALR Graduate Catalog
- the university student handbook
- the university's graduate handbook
- the program's graduate student handbook
- the program's website
- information sent to the student's UALR email address

For multi-institutional programs, the joint graduate student handbook and any corresponding documents from the other participating institution(s) may also apply. Each student should communicate regularly with his / her advisor, advisory committee, and / or graduate program coordinator to ascertain clear expectations for degree or certificate completion.

Academic and Research Integrity

Academic integrity is a cornerstone value of the Graduate School at UALR. Every UALR graduate student is expected to perform his / her academic, research, artistic, scholarly, and other creative activities in a fashion reflective of the highest standards of the university, his / her profession, and a functional civil society. Academic dishonest is considered to be a violation of those standards.

Academic Dishonesty involves cheating in the most general sense of the word and includes, but is not limited to

- the giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance between multiple students
- the giving or receiving of unfair advantages
- plagiarism (i.e., claiming that one owns the ideas, calculations, words, or other work of others.)
- falsification of data
- attempting any of the acts described above

A student's instructor, advisor, graduate advisory committee, program director, department chair, dean, or their representatives may initiate actions against a graduate student who is suspected of academic dishonesty. Disciplinary actions will follow procedures found in the Academic Integrity and Grievance Policy of the Faculty handbook (<http://ualr.edu/provost/appeals.pdf>).

UALR is equally committed to complying with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as well as professional and societal standards related to the ethical and honest conduct of research. The irresponsible conduct of research includes, but is not limited to violation of laws, regulations, and professional standards in the areas of

- Data acquisition, management, sharing, and ownership
- Conflict of interest and commitment
- Human subjects
- Animal Welfare
- Research misconduct (e.g., misuse of research funds)
- Publication practices and responsible authorship
- Collaborative science

For additional information about the responsible conduct of research with respect to human and animal subjects, pathogens, chemicals, radiation, and other potentially dangerous materials, see the section on Research Compliance in the catalog.

When allegations of misconduct arise in the research arena, policies and procedures found in the Research Compliance Policy will be followed. A student's instructor, advisor, graduate advisory committee, program director, department chair, dean, or their representatives may initiate actions against a graduate student who is suspected of research misconduct, in accordance with procedures found in the Academic Integrity and Grievance Policy of the Faculty Handbook (<http://www.ualr.edu/provost/appeals.pdf>).

While a student is under investigation for academic dishonesty or research misconduct, the graduate student may not drop a course or withdraw from the university, sit for a program examination (thesis or dissertation defense or degree capstone examination), or have his or her thesis or dissertation accepted by the Graduate School. If the student is found to have violated academic integrity, he or she may be subject to a variety of disciplinary actions, including dismissal from the Graduate School.

Research Compliance

All graduate students at UALR must perform their academic, research, artistic, scholarly, and other creative activities in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. These activities should reflect the highest standards of the university, the student's profession and functional civil society. Student researchers are expected to ensure the responsible and judicious treatment of humans and animals and the safe handling of biological materials (such as rDNA, living tissue, pathogens, etc).

Before collecting data that involves human subjects, animals or biomaterial, graduate students must consult with the UALR Research Compliance Officer and submit all research protocols to the appropriate research compliance committee for review and approval. Please note: under no circumstances can compliance approval be given retroactively. Students who fail to obtain this approval before beginning their research will be considered to be in violation of research ethics as well as federal laws and regulations. As a result, he or she may face disciplinary action, including dismissal from the Graduate School. Reports of possible research compliance violations should be reported to the UALR Compliance Officer.

UALR's Research Compliance committees include the

- Institutional review board (IRB) for human research subjects
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for animal research subjects
- Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) for biological research

Without approval from one of these committees, students may not present their research findings in any public forum, including but not limited to:

- Publications in the public domain literature (such as books, journals, conference proceedings, etc).
- Oral presentations at public conferences, workshops, or other meetings
- Dissertations or thesis submitted to the Graduate School or ProQuest Database

Information related to UALR research compliance may be obtained from the UALR research Compliance Office located on the fifth floor of the Library. Contact the Research Compliance Officer at 501-569-8583.

Thesis/Dissertation

If a thesis is required, it should be started at least one year before the planned graduation date. The doctoral dissertation should be commenced shortly after acceptance into the doctoral program. Document titles and the names of committee members should be filed on an Appointment of Supervisory or Examining Committee Form with the Graduate School at the beginning of their projects. The *UALR Dissertation and Thesis Guidelines* is available online at <http://www.ualr.edu/gradschool/pdfs/thesisguide.pdf>.

Most activities in which information about humans is recorded, including all theses and dissertations and some class projects, require approval by the UALR Institutional Review Board (IRB) before they are initiated. Any project that involves vertebrate animals must have approval from the UALR Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before it is initiated. Faculty and graduate students are responsible for understanding and complying with all institutional regulations regarding human and animal subjects. Failure to obtain prior approval constitutes unethical conduct of research and has serious consequences. For additional information regarding IRB or IACUC requirements see the ORSP web site (<http://www.ualr.edu/orsp/>) or contact the chair of the appropriate committee.

The thesis/dissertation committee is chosen by the project advisor and the student. A thesis committee must comprise a minimum of three members, including the advisor; a dissertation committee must comprise a minimum of four members, including the advisor. Further parameters for committee selection can be obtained from graduate coordinators.

The Graduate School requires three bound copies of theses/dissertations (four copies for joint programs) and the electronic submission of theses and dissertations to ProQuest. Students may elect to pay for bound copies of theses/dissertations at the Cashier's Office, and the Graduate School will forward copies for binding, or they can have copies bound for distribution to the Graduate School and campus by the appropriate deadlines. (See *UALR Dissertation and Thesis Guidelines* for more information and fees.) One typed, unbound copy of the completed and approved document must be delivered to the Graduate School before the planned graduation date. After review by the Graduate School Dean, it will be returned to the student for corrections, for copying, or for binding by appropriate deadlines. Deadlines for the receipt of all graduation requirements are given on the Graduate School web site at www.gradschool.ualr.edu. The transcript showing the degree earned will not be released until the Graduate School has received copies of thesis or dissertation and ProQuest has received the electronic version.

Comprehensive Examination

Comprehensive examinations are required in many programs. Each program defines specifications for its examination, and the examining committee is appointed by the Graduate School Dean on the recommendation of the program coordinator.

Graduation Application

Students may graduate at the end of Fall, Spring, or Summer terms. The Graduate School Graduation Application should be completed and the graduation fee (required of doctoral students only) paid the semester before the student expects to complete degree requirements. This form certifies that all requirements have been or will be fulfilled by the graduation date, and it must be approved and signed by the program coordinator and Graduate School Dean. Timely submission of the Graduation Application is essential. (Deadlines can be found in the UALR Guide and Schedule of Classes available online at <https://boss.ualr.edu>). Failure to apply to graduate by the published deadline will result in the degree being awarded the following semester.

Commencement

The Graduate School expects all graduate students to participate in the Commencement Program close to or in the semester they complete degree requirements. Commencement ceremonies are conducted two times each year--at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. Master's students may participate (walk) in spring commencement if they expect to graduate during the following Summer terms. However, Summer graduates' names will appear in the Fall graduation program. Specialist and doctoral students must be completely finished with all elements of their degrees before they may march. Caps and gowns may be ordered through the UALR Barnes and Noble Bookstore.

Academic Honors

Alpha Epsilon Lambda

UALR is home to the Zeta chapter of Alpha Epsilon Lambda, The Academic Excellence and Leadership Honor Society of Graduate and Professional School Students. Students are nominated for membership on the basis of proven leadership capabilities and an academic record placing them in the top 35% of their class.

Who's Who Among Students

Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, a national honors program, recognizes exceptional students who have distinguished themselves in scholarship, citizenship, and campus and civic contributions. Students are nominated by faculty, staff, and colleagues; their biographies are reviewed by a special University committee of faculty, staff, and students; and students selected to receive the honor are presented to the Office of Student Activities coordinator, who presents the names to be included in the national publication.

Withdrawal from the University

Students voluntarily withdrawing from the University must complete a Withdrawal Form and an exit interview with a staff member in the Office of Records and Registration and the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid if receiving financial aid. If unable to withdraw in person, students should contact the Office of Records and Registration. Students who fail to withdraw officially and do not complete academic assignments will be reported as having failed in their work for the semester and will receive F grades on their official transcripts.

The last day to officially withdraw from the University without a grade penalty is posted with refund information in the UALR Registration Guide and Class Schedule (<https://boss.ualr.edu>) for each semester or term. Graduate students who have questions about voluntary withdrawal from the University should contact the Office of Records and Registration or the Graduate School Dean.

Student Records and Directory Information

As custodian of educational records, the University assumes the trust and obligation to ensure the full protection of these records. The University's policies and procedures are in full accord with the final regulations implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Copies of this act and its implementing regulations are on file in the Offices of the Dean of Students and Records and Registration and are on reserve in the Ottenheimer Library. Only records that are reasonably necessary or useful to the University's purpose are maintained. Students have the right to see their records and to request amendment if necessary. Policies and procedures regarding student records are detailed in the *UALR Student Handbook* found online at <http://www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/handbook.html>.

Student educational records maintained by the University fall into two general categories: directory information and student records. Directory information is public information and includes a student's name; local and permanent addresses, e-mail, and telephone numbers; photograph; date and place of birth; nationality; religious preference; marital status; parents' or spouses' names and addresses; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height (if athletic team member); student classification; hours enrolled in and completed; major field of study; dates of attendance; degrees, scholarships, awards, and honors received; matriculation and withdrawal dates; and most recent previous educational institution attended. This information is available to the public. The University publishes a *Student Directory* of enrolled students each Fall.

Currently enrolled students may request that all or part of their directory information not be made public by completing an appropriate request form in the Office of Records and Registration no earlier than the first or later than the eleventh day of class. This request will remain in effect until changed by the student in writing, and the data will be treated as student records information. Please consider carefully the consequences of withholding this information. The University does not assume liability for honoring the request to withhold these records, nor does it assume responsibility to contact a student for permission to release them.

Student records information is confidential and includes all other information about a student such as grade reports, transcripts, financial aid records, etc. This information is available only to the student, University officials, and other authorized persons as found online at <http://www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/handbook.html> and as described in the *UALR Student Handbook*.

Student Conduct

Graduate students neither lose the rights nor escape the responsibilities of citizenship through enrollment at UALR. It is expected that Graduate School students will conduct themselves professionally and honorably throughout their association with the University. It is the students' responsibility to be familiar with the *UALR Student Handbook* (<http://www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/handbook.html>), which details student rights, responsibilities, and expected conduct; rules and regulations of the University; and procedures for grievance, appeals, due process, etc.

In addition, students are expected to exemplify and adhere to the codes of conduct prescribed by the professional organization in their fields of study. Students who fail to adhere to these standards are subject to dismissal from the graduate program and the Graduate School.

Appeals and Grievance Procedures

Graduate programs have established processes for appeal of admission decisions and other academic matters. Admission matters are handled by the appropriate program coordinator and the Graduate School Dean. Other matters may involve the appropriate department chairpersons or college deans.

Appeal and grievance procedures for academic and behavioral problems are detailed in the *UALR Student Handbook*, available at the Information Center and the Office of the Dean of Students or online at <http://www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/handbook.html>. The *Handbook* outlines student rights, responsibilities, and behavior; provides information on conduct; details due process procedures for grades and other academic matters; and addresses behaviors such as cheating, plagiarism, and other breaches of acceptable conduct.

Journalism

Stabler Hall
569-3250

Master of Arts

The Master of Arts in Journalism program is located within the School of Mass Communication (SMC) and emphasizes critical thinking about journalistic media content and its effects on the public. It also teaches students how to analyze and conduct scholarly research in journalism and how to write up and present the results of such research to both scholarly and non-scholarly audiences. Although the program does not emphasize the teaching of journalistic writing skills, it does offer limited opportunities to earn graduate credit in advanced skills course work in journalism and public relations.

The program is open to students with undergraduate majors or minors in journalism, to working journalists, and to those without journalism backgrounds who are willing to complete several undergraduate journalism skills courses, as determined by the program coordinator upon admission.

Most of the program's graduate courses are offered during the evening and in the early morning for the convenience of the working professional. Generally, these courses meet once a week for approximately three hours.

Admission Requirements

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a grade point average of at least 3.0 (4.0 scale) on the last 60 hours of undergraduate credit
- Letter of 250-500 words outlining professional goals and purpose for desiring the degree
- A résumé of professional and academic experience and accomplishments
- Two letters of recommendation from former professors who can evaluate the applicant's academic abilities

All of the materials, including official transcript(s) from the institution(s) awarding the last 60 undergraduate semester hours, all graduate hours, and all degrees must be submitted to the UALR Graduate School. In evaluating each applicant, the graduate program admissions committee weighs the transcript(s) and evidence of professional competence or potential. Students whose application materials do not satisfy regular admission requirements may submit scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) as supplemental information to be considered by the admissions committee.

Program Requirements

The journalism graduate program offers three options: thesis, non-thesis, and professional. A comprehensive project and at least 30 weeks of study at UALR are required of all students. Each student's program is subject to an adviser's approval.

All courses usually are taken in the School of Mass Communication; however, up to nine approved cognate graduate hours may be taken in other graduate areas. In some instances, courses from another area can form a concentration area. Only six hours with grades of C can count toward the degree.

If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, that student may enroll for only three credits per semester until the GPA rises to 3.0 or higher. The journalism graduate program coordinator may make exceptions to this rule, if circumstances warrant them.

Students who have not studied journalism at the undergraduate level or who do not have sufficient professional journalism experience to master basic news writing, reporting, and editing skills will be required to complete any or all of the following courses:

- MCOM 2350 Techniques of Writing for the Mass Media
- MCOM 3320 Reporting Principles

Two of the following courses may be required for graduate credit:

- MCOM 5350 Design and Production
- MCOM 5352 News Media and the First Amendment
- MCOM 5358 Reporting of Public Affairs

Students without an undergraduate background in journalism should take MCOM 5352, News Media and the First Amendment. This class should be completed, either at the graduate or undergraduate level, before taking MCOM 7330, Seminar in Mass Communication Law. Students without a solid knowledge of mass communications history should consult with the journalism graduate program coordinator about how to overcome that weakness.

Program Options

Thesis Option

Requires 33 graduate credit hours, including MCOM 3700 and 7305, 7335, 7340, and a 6-hour thesis with oral defense (MCOM 8000).

Non-thesis Option

Requires 33 graduate credit hours, including MCOM 7300, 7305, 5375, 7330, 7310, and the student's choice between 7335 or 7340. The student must also pass comprehensive exams with oral defense.

Professional Option

Requires 33 graduate credit hours, including JOUR 7305, the student's choice between 7335 or 7340, course work of at least 9 additional 7000-level hours, and an approved professional project (Journalism 7180, 7280, 7380).

Transfer Credit

Up to six graduate hours with grades of B or better may be transferred from an accredited institution, if approved by the journalism graduate program coordinator.

Use of Materials

All materials submitted by students as assignments in writing, reporting, editing, photography, and electronic news gathering classes are subject to broadcast or publication. The School of Mass Communication uses a variety of electronic and print media outlets, including its own statewide news service.

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available. Contact the graduate program coordinator for information.

Graduation Requirements

- Earn a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 on an approved course of study as outlined above
- Complete the comprehensive project
- Successfully complete and orally defend a thesis, if applicable

Students who do not achieve a 3.0 GPA within the required hours may complete up to 6 additional hours approved by the coordinator. If the average is not then at least 3.0, the student may not continue in the program.

Courses in Journalism and Mass Communication

JOUR 5340 Newspaper Publishing

Organizational, business aspects of journalism; emphasis on departmental management, interrelation of advertising and circulation in financing.

MCOM 5350 Design and Production

Prerequisite: junior status and MCOM 2320 or consent of instructor based on demonstrable professional experience. Decision-making in the editing process. Principles of typography and design for print and online media.

MCOM 5352 News Media and the First Amendment

Prerequisites: junior standing; MCOM 3360 recommended prerequisite. The restrictions, obligations, and responsibilities of the news media; the law and its effect on publishing and broadcasting; relations between the law and freedoms protected by the U.S. Constitution.

MCOM 5357 Seminar in Radio-Television Journalism

Broadcast news policies; history; governmental, other forms of regulation; social implications; influence of various publics on radio-television news coverage.

MCOM 5358 Reporting of Public Affairs

Prerequisites: MCOM 2320, 2350, and 3320; MCOM 3315 and 3360 may be taken as prerequisites or corequisites; or consent of instructor based upon demonstrable advanced media experience. Practice in gathering materials and writing in-depth stories on public affairs; emphasis on courts, police, government, education, ecology, the economy, and social issues.

MCOM 5359 Feature and Magazine Writing

Prerequisites: MCOM 2320 and 2350. Planning, researching, and writing the feature article for newspapers, magazines, and online publications. Emphasis on humanistic reporting and providing a context for the news through thorough research and application of this research to the article. Materials submitted as assignments are subject to publication.

MCOM 5360 Editorial Writing

Media's comment function, policies, problems.

MCOM 5375 Journalistic Freedom and Responsibility

Journalistic ethics and practices; professional conduct, responsibilities of the journalist in a free society.

MCOM 5380 Public Relations Writing

Prerequisites: MCOM 2320 and 2350; MCOM 2350 may be corequisite. The journalistic function in public relations, includes the writing and processing of news and feature releases for print and electronic media and editing internal and external publications.

MCOM 5384 Topics in Mass Communication

Prerequisite: junior standing and consent of instructor. Advanced and specialized topics in mass communication, especially those of current interest and relevance to mass communication professionals. Possible subjects include the following: journalism, entertainment, production and design, Web and media, strategic communication, mass media, etc. Classes will provide an in-depth understanding of topics chosen. Refer to the semester schedule for specific topics offered.

MCOM 7180, 7280, 7380 Special Problems in Journalism

Prerequisite: consent of a graduate faculty member. Individual work on selected problems in journalism.

MCOM 7190, 7290, 7390 Readings in Mass Communication

Prerequisite: consent of a graduate faculty member. Individual readings of selected works in mass communication.

MCOM 7300 Pro-seminar in Journalism

Introduces graduate students to journalism graduate program content and faculty expectations; to IRB certification; to social science research techniques and interpretation; to scholarly manuscript process and presentation; and to post-MA career possibilities.

MCOM 7305 Mass Communication Processes and Effects

Structure, theory, processes, effects of mass communication, mass media in the U.S.; relationships of media to one another, to other major institutions in U.S. society, to individuals and groups.

MCOM 7310 Precision Journalism

Application of behavioral science methodology to news reporting, especially to reporting of governmental, public affairs.

MCOM 7315 International Mass Communication

Comparison, contrast of mass media around the world; interaction between media and governments; role of media in the development of nations; international communication theories, models.

MCOM 7320 Literature of Journalism

Review and assessment of writings, primarily books, concerning various aspects of journalism to provide a familiarization with and understanding of the body of literature pertaining to the discipline.

MCOM 7325 The Press and Propaganda

Interaction between press and institutionalized propaganda; theory, practice of persuasive campaigns created and implemented by political, religious, commercial institutions; strategy and media use for creating public opinions and issues, candidates, products, policies.

MCOM 7330 Seminar in Mass Communication Law

Prerequisite: Journalism 4352/5352 or equivalent. Pinpoints research procedures and provides incentive, direction, and a forum for examining topics in mass communication law; treats specific problems by examining statutory confines and court interpretations.

MCOM 7335 Seminar in Journalism Quantitative Research

Prerequisite: Journalism 7310 or equivalent. Methodological approaches to the study of mass communication structure, processes, effects; emphasis on survey and experimental research procedures and content analysis.

MCOM 7340 Seminar in Journalism History

Historiography as applied in the field of journalism history; analysis of and practice in the scholarly writing of journalism history; selected topics in journalism history.

JOUR 7345 Scholastic Journalism

Techniques of teaching journalism in the secondary schools, supervising school publications.

MCOM 8000 Thesis

Prerequisite: successful completion of comprehensive examination. A scholarly work, based on research, that advances an original point of view in the discipline of journalism. Variable credit of one to six hours.