

5. MS Program

The Department of Astronomy allows the options of obtaining an MS degree with or without a written thesis. Those students choosing the thesis option are expected to finish a significant research project and write up the results in an acceptable format. Students choosing a non-thesis option are expected to acquire a broader knowledge of astronomy and to pass a comprehensive exam. The general conditions discussed in Section 3 also apply here. MS students choosing the non-thesis option would normally be advised by the Graduate Director. Where the thesis option has been chosen, the composition of the advising committee is determined by the research work being done. A summary of the program is found in Table 2; details are in the following sections.

5.1 Thesis Option

5.1.1 Course Requirements

University -- Graduate courses totaling 30 credits are required of which 6 credits are to be Master's thesis research (ASTR 799). Of the remaining 24 credits, no less than 12 must be in the major and no less than 12 must be at the level of 600 or above.

Department -- Students must satisfy the same course requirements as for the Ph.D. program (see section 4). The final list of courses must be approved by the graduate advisor.

5.1.2 Thesis

The research topic must be approved by the student's study committee and the thesis must be written in accordance with University regulations. Whenever possible, the cost of reproducing the final draft of the thesis will be assumed by the Department. A final oral examination will cover the thesis work as well as the primary supporting fields of the candidate. Approval of the committee must be unanimous. In some cases the committee may recommend that the candidate return for a second examination at a later date.

5.1.3 Regulations

As with the PhD thesis, there are deadlines which must be met if the degree is to be awarded in a given semester. The student is responsible for knowing these details. As for all graduate degrees, the University requires a minimum average of B. It is not necessary for the student to take the Qualifier to obtain the MS degree with a thesis option. There is a University limit of five years from first enrolling in the Graduate School to obtaining the MS degree.

5.2 Non-Thesis Option

5.2.1 Course Requirements and Regulations

University -- Courses totaling 30 credits are required of which a minimum of 18 must be at the level of 600 or above. In addition, one or more scholarly papers must be submitted and a comprehensive final examination must be passed.

Department -- Courses -- Students must take all five of the core Astronomy graduate courses. Additional courses in Astronomy and supporting areas must be taken to fulfill University requirements. The final list of courses must be approved by the thesis advisor.

Department -- Other -- The scholarly papers required by the Graduate School can be papers required as part of a graduate level astronomy course if the faculty approves. The

report for the second year project will normally satisfy this requirement. The required comprehensive exam will be the PhD qualifier which will be taken at the end of the second year. A score will be specified each year that will constitute an MS pass for that year.

As for all other cases, the student is responsible for knowing and meeting University deadlines.