

August 6, 2012

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS & PROGRAM DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Revision to the Policy on the Duplication of Advanced Academic Degrees

At its May 14, 2012 meeting, the Graduate Council approved a revision to its policy on the Duplication of Advanced Academic Degrees. The revised policy is attached and will be effective immediately. It will be posted on the Graduate Council's webpage and it will be published in the Graduate Studies section of the 2013-2014 General Catalog.

Policy Revision

The Council added the following statement to the policy on the Duplication of Advanced Academic Degrees:

Departments and programs that award a M.A. or M.S. degree in the course of progress toward the Ph.D. may confer the Master's degree on any enrolled Ph.D. student who has met the departmental and University requirements for the degree, unless the student already holds a M.A. or M.S. degree in the same or related field. In particular, departments and programs may confer the M.A. or M.S. degree on a Ph.D. student who holds a Master's degree in a different discipline without the need for a petition to the Graduate Council or the Graduate Dean.

Departments and programs are encouraged to consider waiving pre-candidacy requirements for students who already hold a Master's degree in the same or related field, in order to decrease the time to degree.

Many departments and graduate programs (hereafter referred to as departments) routinely award the M.A. or M.S. degree on the way to the Ph.D., and most, if not all, of its students complete the requirements for the Master's degree as part of their pre-candidacy Ph.D. requirements. The revision allows departments to file the requisite forms on behalf of students to receive a M.A. or M.S. degree who fulfill the degree requirements, even if they already hold a M.A. or M.S. degree in a different field. Such requests will no longer require a petition to the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Council.

It is the department faculty's responsibility to determine whether the second Master's degree is in a fundamentally different disciplinary field than the degree that the student already holds. In addition, faculty are expected to look beyond the degree title when deciding whether a second Master's degree is justified. The student's previous Master's coursework and/or research should represent a different type of training than the training received in the UCSD doctoral program. It should be emphasized that the department, and not the student, determines whether the UCSD M.A. or M.S. degree is in a fundamentally different field than the first Master's degree.

Current Policy and Graduate Admissions

The addition to the Duplication of Advanced Degrees policy applies to students enrolled in Ph.D. programs that are eligible to receive a Master's degree on the way who already hold a M.A. or M.S. degree. In general, UCSD does not admit students to pursue duplicate advanced academic degrees at the same level, i.e. a second M.A., M.S., or Ph.D. degree, regardless of whether the second degree is in a fundamentally different disciplinary field. The Council maintains its support for this existing component of the policy. Departments requesting admission for a student to pursue a second degree at the same level are still required to submit a petition to the Graduate Council that addresses the criteria outlined in the attached policy.

Implementation of Policy Revision

Effective immediately, any current Ph.D. student who holds a M.A. or M.S. degree and has completed or will complete the requirements for a second Master's degree during their course of progress to the doctorate may apply to receive the degree with the consent of the department. However, the second degree must be in a different field. Students who hold a degree in the same field (e.g., a student enrolled in the Sociology Ph.D. program who received a M.A. in Sociology or a discipline very similar to Sociology despite being given a different title) from another university prior to entering UCSD's program are not eligible to receive a second Master's degree because it is expected that these students have received training similar to that received at UCSD. Master's degrees will not be awarded retroactively to graduated students that have already been awarded the Ph.D.

Progress Towards the Ph.D. Degree

Although the revision to the policy provides departments with more flexibility in awarding Master's degrees on the way to the Ph.D. to students completing the degree requirements, the Council would like to emphasize that students' progress toward obtaining the doctoral degree should not be impeded in order to fulfill the Master's degree requirements. Departments are strongly encouraged to consider waiving pre-candidacy requirements for students who completed prior training in the same or related areas during pursuit of their first Master's degree.

Graduate Curriculum Sections of the General Catalog

The Council has identified departments and graduate programs that include statements about the duplication of advanced degrees policy in their graduate curriculum sections of the General Catalog. Senate staff will follow up with the graduate coordinators from those specific departments. The departments will be asked whether they would like to revise the catalog copy for 2013-2014 based on this policy revision or if the departments would like to keep the restriction in place at the department level. The 2012-2013 General Catalog has already been finalized for publication.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the policy, please contact the Graduate Council via Lori Hullings, Senate Analyst, at lhullings@ucsd.edu or x40100.

Sincerely,



Athina Markou, Chair
Graduate Council

cc: M. Allen Divisional Deans
K. Barrett Department/Program MSOs
D. Hamann Graduate Coordinators and Advisors
G. Masters
J. Sobel

Attachment

Duplication of Advanced Academic Degrees

*Approved by the Graduate Council May 14, 2012 and effective August 6, 2012.
Supersedes version published in the 2012-2013 General Catalog under Graduate Education.*

Normally, duplication of advanced academic degrees, M.A., M.S., Ph.D., is not permitted. A duplicate academic degree is one at the same level, e.g., a second Master's degree or second Ph.D., regardless of the discipline or the specialization awarding the degree. A professional degree at the Master's or doctoral level, e.g., Au.D., D.M.A., Ed.D., M.A.S., M.B.A., M.Ed., M.Eng., M.F.A., M.I.A., M.P.I.A., M.D., Pharm.D., is not regarded as a duplicate of an academic degree.

Students who already hold an advanced academic degree may be admitted to UC San Diego to pursue a second advanced academic degree at the same level only under limited circumstances, and only with the consent of the Graduate Council. Recognizing that there are circumstances in which it is appropriate for a student to pursue a second degree, the Graduate Council will consider the following criteria when reviewing requests for permission to do so at UC San Diego.

1. The degree already held by the student must be in a fundamentally different disciplinary field from the department or program to which the student is applying. A request for permission to be admitted to a degree program at UC San Diego should document this clearly, and should indicate the differences both in intellectual training and in qualification for future employment that the second degree would confer.
2. The department or program considering the applicant must make a clear case that there is no other way at UC San Diego for the student to obtain the same outcome for future employment prospects, e.g., by pursuing a master's program or postdoctoral study rather than a second Ph.D.

If the decision of the Graduate Council is that the student should be admitted to a particular department or program for a master's degree alone, the student is barred from requesting permission to continue for a Ph.D. in that department or program.

Departments and programs that award a M.A. or M.S. degree in the course of progress toward the Ph.D. may confer the Master's degree on any enrolled Ph.D. student who has met the departmental and University requirements for the degree, unless the student already holds a M.A. or M.S. degree in the same or related field. In particular, departments and programs may confer the M.A. or M.S. degree on a Ph.D. student who holds a Master's degree in a different discipline without the need for a petition to the Graduate Council or the Graduate Dean.

Departments and programs are encouraged to consider waiving pre-candidacy requirements for students who already hold a Master's degree in the same or related field, in order to decrease the time to degree.