

ORAL SCIENCES PROGRAM

GRADUATE EDUCATION POLICIES

This graduate program leads to the Master of Science (M.S.) degree. It is conducted by the School of Dental Medicine under the sponsor-ship of the Graduate School of the State University of New York at Buffalo. The M.S. degree is awarded by the University upon recommendation of the Graduate School after certification by the Oral Sciences Program that all requirements for the degree have been completed. The Oral Sciences Program involves a group of faculty from several departments of the School of Dental Medicine, all members of the faculty of the Graduate School. A list of this faculty, with summaries of their research interests and activities, is available from the Program Director.

These Graduate Education Policies apply to all students enrolled in the Oral Sciences Program. They are compatible with those of the Graduate School. A complete description of Graduate School policies may be obtained from the Graduate School (549 Capen Hall, Amherst Campus; telephone: 716-645-2939). **All prospective and enrolled Oral Sciences graduate students must thoroughly review these Graduate Education Policies and retain them for future reference.**

1. **The Oral Sciences Program does not provide funds for student financial support via stipends, fellowships, assistantships, tuition waivers, or any other form of support.** The Oral Sciences Program will provide the necessary courses and research training to fulfill the Master Degree's requirements. The students are expected to be responsible for tuition, fees, and all other expenses required by the University for graduate students enrolled in a Master's Program.
2. **The Oral Sciences Program is an academic research-oriented graduate program and does not include clinical training. Thus, your enrollment implies a commitment to learn about and to engage in research. This means that the didactic curriculum of the Master's Program in Oral Sciences may not necessarily be directly related to a clinical setting. Rather, the overall design of the program is to provide background, expertise and current concepts of basic sciences as related to dental research and oral biology.** A minimum of 30 credit hours of course work, including the satisfactory completion of a written thesis based on independent research, is required for the M.S. degree.
3. There is a minimum residency requirement of 24 credit hours after which transfer credit may be applied to complete the 30 credit hour requirement. Transfer credit must be approved by the Program Director and the student's Graduate Program Committee. Only bonafide graduate courses taken at recognized institutions and completed with grades of "B" or better are eligible for consideration as transfer credit. Such courses must have been completed within four (4) years of the date of initial enrollment in the Oral Sciences Program. Courses specifically required for the D.D.S., D.M.D., or equivalent professional degree may not be used for transfer credit. **International students are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam and achieve a minimum score of 550 (paper based test), 213 (computer based test) or 79 (Internet based test) before being admitted to the program. No student will be admitted with a TOEFL score below those values. In addition to your TOEFL score, you are expected to be proficient enough with the use of spoken English to allow for efficient and effective communication with your Committee members, your teachers, and all those who are involved in your training.**

4. All credit hours must be in graduate level courses (i.e. 500, 600, 700 numbered courses). The student must formally register for each course in an accurate and timely manner prior to the start of each semester. **800 and 900 numbered courses are not applicable to the Master's degree.**

5. **Typical** requirements for the degree include the following mix of **minimum** credit hours:

Required courses	18 credit hours
Elective courses	4 credit hours
Research	<u>8 credit hours</u>
Total	30 credit hours

6. REQUIRED COURSES

All students are to take the required courses listed in the courses list. Exemptions or substitutions may be granted by the Program Director only upon written request from the student based upon valid academic justification. The program director will inform the Graduate School of these substitutions.

7. ELECTIVE COURSES

Each student may take credit hours of elective course work, usually related to the student's area of research. Elective courses must be chosen after consultation with the student's Major Professor and Graduate Committee. For additional information, the student should consult departmental and university course listings. These must also be 500, 600, or 700 numbered courses). A sample list of elective courses can be found in the courses list.

8. Any Independent Study or Informal Course to be taken as part of a student's program must be accompanied by a written statement from the prospective course director indicating: area of study, objectives, course requirements, evaluation procedure, and rationale for credit allowance. Such a course must be suitable for level credit and not duplicate content available in formal courses. The taking of Independent Study must have the prior approval of the Program Director. **Credits earned in the Independent Study courses are NOT applicable to fulfill the minimum number of credit hours (30) required for the Master's degree.**

9. Continuous Registration: Graduate students must register (and pay all tuition and fees) for a minimum of one (1) credit hour each Fall and Spring semester until the degree has been awarded, including the final semester before actual degree conferral. If such registration is impossible or inappropriate at any time, the student must secure a leave of absence, a waiver of continuous registration, or withdraw from the Graduate School. Requests for leaves of absence and waivers of continuous registration must be approved by the Oral Sciences Program Director and by the Graduate School. Normally, leaves of absence are only granted for periods up to one year.

10. The maximum time for completion of the program of study leading to the M.S. degree in the Oral Sciences is four (4) years. Extension of a student's period of study beyond this limit must be approved by the director and the Graduate School. Although no guidelines are set for a minimum period of study, the typical student takes a minimum of four (4) semesters of full time status to complete the program.
11. Students who elect to pursue this program on a part-time basis must be prepared to devote a minimum of one full day per week to research activities once the research phase of the program has begun.
12. **Grading Policies:** The grading policies used in the Oral Sciences Program are within the policy guidelines established by the Graduate School. The most relevant of these policies are:
 - a) Letter grades are required in all formal courses to be applied toward fulfillment of the degree requirements except that "S" grades are permitted for up to 4 credit hours of elective course work taken in departments outside the School of Dental Medicine.
 - b) For "Research," letter grades or "S/U" grades may be assigned by the course director at the end of each semester.
 - c) **Grades below a "B" are unacceptable in required courses.** Any unacceptable grades in a student's program must be justified by an explanatory letter from the Program Director to the Graduate School when the student's "Application to Candidacy" is submitted and/or before degree conferral. Such a letter is based on written confirmation from the original course director that, through extra study, a project, or other appropriate means, the student has demonstrated competence in the subject to at least a "B" level of performance. It must be understood, however, that the above options are at the discretion of the course director and the Program Director. Thus, a student with an unacceptable grade in any course may be required to reregister and repeat that course in order to earn the minimum acceptable level of performance.
 - d) Graduate students must have an overall "B" (3.0 quality point) average in all formal course work, which is to be completed for graduate credit at SUNY-Buffalo and applied towards the M.S. degree.
 - e) A grade of "Incomplete" (I) will be given only in those instances in which the student has not been able to complete all of the assigned projects and/or examinations in a course due to illness or other unforeseeable and compelling circumstances. An "I" is not available to students who have not satisfactorily completed the other academic requirements of the course. If an "I" grade is given, a letter grade must be assigned after no more than two (2) additional semesters plus the intervening summer, although this time period may be shortened by the Program Director in individual cases. If the course requirements are not completed by that date, an "I" will automatically be changed to an "Unsatisfactory" (U) grade. Course directors may set their own conditions for removing an "I" so long as the time limit is not longer than that specified above. All "I" grades must be removed from the record before the student's "Application to Candidacy" is submitted to the Graduate School as well as before degrees are awarded.

13. Academic Standing and Probation: Students who do not achieve the minimum grading requirements in their courses in any given semester are considered to be on academic probation during the subsequent semester, meaning that a significant improvement is expected during that semester. In addition, students who do not meet the expected rules of Academic Integrity, as dictated by the Graduate School may also be put on academic probation pending a resolution of incidents violating Academic Integrity.
14. Academic Dismissal and Appeal: If the expected improvement in the performance of a student on academic probation is not forthcoming, dismissal from the program for academic reasons may be made by the Program Director. Furthermore, if there has been a significant failure to meet the expected standard of performance, whether academic or of ethical nature (as defined by the Academic Policies and Procedures of the Graduate School) during any given semester, whether on academic probation or not, the Program Director may, on advice from the Oral Sciences Program Administration Committee, dismiss the student from the program. Any academic dismissal may be appealed by registered letter to the Program Director within 10 days of receipt of the dismissal letter. Within 10 days of receipt of the appeal letter, the Program Director will convene the Program Administration Committee and ask it to make a recommendation based upon an assessment of the student's record of performance and the appeal for reinstatement. Within 3 days of the meeting of the Program Administration Committee, the Program Director will inform the student whether the appeal has been accepted and, if so, under what conditions, or whether the dismissal should stand. If the appeal is denied, the student may request that the Program Director convene a special meeting of the entire Oral Sciences Faculty to consider the appeal for reinstatement. Such a meeting will be scheduled at the earliest opportunity. After examining and discussing all information relevant to the issue, those Oral Sciences Faculty present at the meeting will decide by majority vote whether to reinstate the student and, if so, under what conditions, or whether to sustain the previous dismissal decision.
15. Graduate Program Committee: Each student will have a **Graduate Program Committee**. The function of this committee is to determine, in consultation with the student, a suitable academic program, including elective course work, and a specific thesis research topic. This committee will consist of three faculty members, at least one of whom must be members of the Graduate School faculty. All members of the committee, including the chair, will be appointed by the Program Director. Such committees will be appointed by no later than the end of the second semester of enrollment for full-time students and by no later than the end of the fourth semester of enrollment for part-time students. The chairperson of this committee is the student's Major Professor and research-thesis advisor. The Major Professor must be a member of the Faculty of the Graduate School. Unless warranted by specific circumstances, the Major Professor will be selected from among the faculty participants in the Oral Sciences Program. Major Professors and other committee members will be appointed only if they agree to serve in this capacity. It is the student's responsibility to obtain this agreement from his or her prospective Major Professor.
16. In agreeing to be a student's Major Professor for his or her research and thesis, it is implied that faculty member and his or her parent academic department will provide or obtain the resources necessary for the conduct of the student's research.
17. Application to Candidacy: This document must be submitted on special forms provided by the Graduate School which are available in the office of the Program Director. The Application to

Candidacy is generally filled after two semesters of full-time enrollment for students seeking a master's degree. **The deadline for submission of the student's Application To Candidacy is dictated by the Graduate School at specific times before the different dates of the M.S. degree conferral. It is the student's responsibility to anticipate submission dates.** The Application To Candidacy includes:

- a) An accurate listing of all graduate courses, with grades, taken or to be taken, for the degree.
 - b) The program to be submitted must have the signatures of the student, the Major Professor, the other committee members, and the Program Director.
 - c) In the event that any of the criteria have not been met, approval for the program is withheld by the Graduate School and a letter of inquiry is sent to the student's Major Professor with a copy to the Program Director.
18. Human Subjects: Any research that involves human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the investigation is begun and prior to submission of the Application to Candidacy to the Graduate School.
19. Animal Use: Any research that involves animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to submission of the Application To Candidacy to the Graduate School.
20. The Thesis: A typical thesis usually include the following:
- (a) title page
 - (b) acknowledgments
 - (c) abstract
 - (d) table of contents
 - (e) introduction
 - (f) review of literature
 - (g) materials and methods
 - (h) results
 - (i) discussion
 - (j) references
 - (k) appendices (if needed)

Each section of the thesis must be grammatically correct and free of technical, spelling, and typographical errors. Every thesis should be prepared with the intent to publish the work in a recognized refereed journal, although publication in a refereed journal is not a requirement for the degree. In order to expedite its editing for publication, the thesis format given above may be somewhat modified. For example, the review of literature section, raw data, and additional information not likely to be submitted for publication may be placed in the appendix.

21. Defense of Thesis: The purpose of the Defense of Thesis is to determine whether the candidate for the Oral Sciences M.S. degree understands and can explain the research problem, hypothesis, protocol, rationale, methodologies, data acquisition, data analysis, results, conclusions, and the implications of the results and conclusions. The thesis defense will also determine the candidate's overall knowledge of the scientific method, the relevant literature in

the field, underlying mechanisms relevant to the research, and basic subject matter in the general area in which the research was conducted.

A date for the defense of the thesis will be scheduled by the Program Director after consultation with the Major Professor and the student, **and only after the student has provided a written document in which all committee members have approved the thesis and have agreed to permit the student to defend it.** The student must provide a copy of the thesis to each member of his or her Graduate Program Committee and to the Program Director at least two (2) weeks prior to the anticipated date of the defense, at which time an invitation to attend the upcoming defense will be sent to each member of the Oral Sciences Faculty.

The format for the thesis defense will be as follows:

- a. Program Director (or designee) introduces candidate
- b. Candidate presents 10-15 minute summary of research
- c. Members of Graduate Program committee ask questions
- d. Major Professor asks questions
- e. Oral Sciences faculty and guests ask questions
- f. Program Director (or designee) asks questions and concludes the thesis defense

The defense itself will be chaired by the Program Director or his or her designee. Immediately after conclusion of the formal defense, the Major Professor, the Graduate Program Committee, and the Program Director will meet to vote on the acceptability of the thesis and its defense. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and evaluate the candidate's performance during the defense in order to evaluate whether or not the candidate's overall understanding, knowledge base, and explanations are satisfactory.

At the conclusion of this evaluation, a decision will be made whether or not conferral of the M.S. degree will be recommended to the Graduate School. In the event that degree conferral cannot be recommended, the candidate will be immediately informed of the reason(s) and what will be required to remediate the situation. Should the candidate be asked to defend the thesis again, only the Major Professor, the Graduate Committee members and the Program Director will conduct the second defense.

Any remaining changes that need to be made in the thesis at this time must be accomplished under the direction of the Major Professor prior to certification of completion to the Graduate School and prior to the binding of the thesis.

23. Binding of the thesis: The student must provide the Graduate School with an electronic copy of the final thesis (to be uploaded to the Graduate School) before the deadline date for the upcoming degree conferral (the student is responsible for finding out the exact dateline for each degree conferral cycle). A bound copy of the thesis must also be provided to the Program Director and to the student's Major Professor at this time. All expenses incurred in typing, preparation and binding of the thesis must be borne by the student. An exception to providing a copy of the thesis to the Program Director will be considered if doing so is a significant financial burden to the student.
24. Final requirements: The student must complete all outstanding requirements by the date determined by the Graduate School prior to degree conferral. All outstanding accounts owed to the University must be settled prior to the conferral of the degree.

25. **Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures**. In accordance with University, Graduate School, and Oral Sciences Program policies, it is expected that each student will have the highest concepts of personal and professional honor and integrity. This implies that each student will conduct himself or herself in an ethical manner during examinations, at all other times when professional and academic performance is undertaken, and will not condone or encourage unprofessional or unethical conduct by others. Failure on the part of any student to abide by these standards will, in most cases, result in a recommendation for dismissal of the student from the program for disciplinary reasons. Details of specific policies and procedures are available at: <http://grad.buffalo.edu/study/progress/policylibrary.html>, under, "Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures"

26. *****IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO:**

a) READ AND UNDERSTAND THESE GUIDELINES

b) FOLLOW UP ON ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

c) CHECK WITH THE GRADUATE SCHOOL (645-2939) AND WITH THE OFFICE OF RECORDS AND REGISTRATION (829-2361) PRIOR TO ALL DEADLINE DATES TO BE SURE THAT ALL REQUIREMENTS AND PAPERWORK FOR CONFERRAL OF THE DEGREE HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE IN THIS POLICY.