

LRC MASTER'S EXIT OPTIONS

There are five possible exit options for the LRC master's degree. The exit options are:

1. Portfolio
2. Scholarly Research Paper
3. Master's Thesis
4. Take Home Exam
5. Exit Course(s)

Students will work closely with their faculty advisor during their program to determine which option is most appropriate for their individual, intellectual, and professional goals and development. The faculty advisor must approve the exit option choice and will be responsible for evaluating that all the final requirements have been met. Each of the options are explained briefly below. Students will work with their advisors to refine and develop any further procedures and details.

Portfolio

The purpose of the Portfolio Option is to provide an in-depth, long-term opportunity for students to reflect, self-evaluate and synthesize intellectual/professional development over the course of the master's program. The decision to compile a portfolio is made well before the student's final semester in the program in consultation with their advisor. The organization and content of individual portfolios may differ considerably, allowing for innovation and self-expression. The portfolio serves to synthesize and highlight the student's significant learning experiences and development. Students will explore and examine prominent themes, concepts, theoretical frameworks, and changing practices that have characterized their participation in the program. The synthesis is generative and involves more than a summary of course work. It relates course work, papers and other items in the portfolio to a coherent body of knowledge (e.g., reading/literacy, bilingual/multicultural education, etc.) and to the student's intellectual and professional growth.

Items to be included in a portfolio are student-determined in consultation with the advisor. Portfolios may include papers from relevant courses, notes, handouts, thematic units, instructional plans, logs, course exam essays, and multimedia. The guiding selection criterion is that student, in collaboration with their advisor, adequately demonstrates the rationale for including particular items and their significance in terms of learning. The format and organization of the portfolio are determined by the student and the faculty advisor.

A student's portfolio is generally evaluated based on these criteria:

1. Reflective synthesis of learning experience
2. Organization of portfolio presentation
3. Solid development of ideas related to relevant theory and research
4. Integration of course work, theory, and personal and professional growth
5. Clarity of rationales and statements of themes

Scholarly Research Paper

The purpose of the Scholarly Research Paper Option is to provide the opportunity for students, at the end of their program to integrate ideas, issues, beliefs, and knowledge in greater depth. Hence, scholarly research papers typically focus on a particular topic or research question. The paper may be considered as potentially publishable in a professional or scholarly journal. This paper may take two forms - a theoretical paper or a data based research report.

With the support of the advisor, the student presents a brief proposal which must be approved by the advisor. The paper proposal typically includes a statement of the purpose of the research and research questions, an overview of the theoretical frame, a bibliography of the related professional literature, a description of the research context, methods for data collection and analysis, and the time line for the study.

The scholarly research paper is evaluated by the faculty advisor using the following criteria:

- A. Organization of the report/paper
- B. Quality of the ideas based on the research purpose, design, and supporting evidence
- C. Presentation of ideas and/or data supporting the central premise
- D. Integration of ideas with the professional literature and theoretical frame
- E. Scholarly quality and originality of ideas
- F. Appropriateness of paper for proposed journal for submission (optional)
(If the paper is being submitted to a journal, the journal guidelines for submission should be submitted with the paper.)

Master's Thesis

The Master's Thesis Option differs from the other exit options in that the master's thesis is regulated by University wide guidelines (see <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/degree-requirements/masters-degrees>). This option requires the formation of a master's committee consisting of the student's faculty advisor and two additional faculty members (at least one of the two from LRC), chosen by the student in consultation with their advisor. According to University guidelines, at least two faculty must be current tenured, tenure-track, or approved tenure-equivalent UA faculty members. The advisor serves as chair of the master's committee. Work on a master's thesis should begin well before the last semester of course work.

In consultation with the faculty advisor and other members of the committee, the student submits a thesis proposal, which must be approved by the committee. Throughout the writing of the thesis, students meet regularly with their advisor and with other committee members as needed. The remaining procedures for the defense and approval of the penultimate draft will be coordinated by the student's faculty advisor with the committee members according to the guidelines of the Graduate College.

Take-Home Examination

The written Take-Home Exam Option is taken during the student's last semester of study and typically consists of several questions that are developed and agreed upon by the student and advisor. The written Take-Home Examination is tailored to the student's intellectual and professional concerns and issues related to that person's course work in LRC.

A student's Take-Home Exam is read and independently evaluated by the student's faculty advisor. The Take-Home Exam consists of a written open-book examination taken during an agreed upon period (one to four weeks), and an optional oral follow-up.

The student's Take-Home Exam is evaluated based on the following criteria.

- A. Validity of the statements made and ideas expressed
- B. Organization of the presentation
- C. Appropriateness of supporting ideas
- D. Integration of ideas and references
- E. Scholarly quality and originality of ideas

Exit Course(s)

This Exit Course(s) Option requires additional appropriate coursework with a minimum of 32 credit units. Exit Course(s) are selected carefully with, and approved by, the faculty advisor. The focus of this option is on the specific content and requirements of a program that meets the professional and academic needs of the student. Students are encouraged to take additional coursework in areas of specialized academic interest. The additional course content is intended to provide more depth, breadth and rigor to the student's academic interests and goals.

The student's Exit Course(s) Option performance will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- A. Appropriate range and rigor of course content
- B. Academic and professional rationale for course selection
- C. Quality of performance in individual courses