

PREPARING FOR AN ADVANCED DEGREE

Admission to a graduate program at UC Merced requires a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, that is comparable to a degree from the University of California both in the level of scholarly achievement and in the distribution of academic subject matter. Although applications for graduate study will be evaluated primarily on scholarly achievement, UC Merced will utilize the totality of a prospective student's qualifications, including research, work experience, recommendations and other creative accomplishments, to render a decision. To be eligible for admission to the UC Merced Graduate Division, you must have a minimum B average in your undergraduate course work. In addition to your undergraduate transcripts and an application, you will need to submit Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, letters of recommendation and, for certain programs, examples of your own written work that can be evaluated by the graduate admissions committee. Information regarding the GRE is available online at www.ets.org or at (609) 771-7670.

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

An applicant can be considered for only one program area during a term. Applications to UC Merced can be accessed electronically at <http://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/>. Applications are accepted for the Fall semester only. Prospective students are encouraged to begin the admissions process as early as possible in the prior academic year. International applicants should consult the UC Merced Graduate Division website listed above for details regarding application and admission. Residents of the United States must have all application materials at UC Merced by January 15. In order for an application to be fully considered, a non-refundable application fee of \$60 must be paid. You may pay using a credit card when applying online. Alternatively, checks should be made payable to UC Regents and mailed to the Graduate Division Office. Fee exemptions for UC approved programs are available.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Students with credentials from universities outside the United States should begin the application process well in advance of the deadline date. Official copies or certified copies of all transcripts in English and in the original language are required.

Applicants whose native language or language of instruction is not English must show evidence of having recently taken the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) examination. UC Merced requires a minimum score of 550 on the paper test or 213 on the computer-based TOEFL test or a score of at least 7 on the IELTS. Information on the TOEFL is available online at www.toefl.org and IELTS information at www.ielets.org. These requirements are waived for applicants who have received

an advanced degree from a U.S. institution or from a country where English is the language of instruction.

International applicants must certify that they have sufficient funds to cover fees, tuition and living expenses for the first year of their study at UC Merced. A Foreign Applicant Questionnaire for the purpose of verifying the amount and source of funds available for graduate study will be forwarded upon acceptance into graduate study. Financial verification must be provided before visa forms can be issued.

ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION

A formal notice from the dean of the Graduate Division is the official proof of admission to graduate study at UC Merced. Successful applicants will be notified as soon as possible after the program faculty has made its recommendations to the dean of the Graduate Division. Accepted students will be asked to verify their intention to register by filling out and returning a Statement of Intent to Register. Return of this form will reserve your slot in the program. Should you choose not to accept the offer of admission, we ask that you also notify us by completing the Declination of Admission section so that we can offer the place to another applicant.

Individuals must register each semester to retain graduate student status. Registration provides the necessary access to courses, facilities and faculty. Students holding nonimmigrant visas must register for each semester covered by their visa.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

UC Merced will offer the Master of Science (M.S.), Master of Arts (M.A.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees. New students will be assigned a faculty advisor and committee that will assist them in developing a curriculum to meet the requirements. Although considerable flexibility to meet individual needs exists, requirements usually include a core of required material that a student must master.

The M.S. and M.A. degrees are either Plan I or Plan II programs. Plan I requires a minimum of 20 semester units of upper division and graduate courses plus completion of a thesis. Plan II requires at least 24 semester units of upper division and graduate courses, followed by a comprehensive examination administered by the faculty.

Students pursuing M.S. or M.A. Plan I degrees will begin their thesis research at the end of the first year. Although they may continue to take additional graduate seminars or independent study, the majority of the second year will involve thesis research and writing. The thesis committee must approve the

scope of the thesis and provide guidance during the process of developing the thesis. Approval of the thesis must be unanimous for the award of the master's degree.

The Ph.D. degree is designed to prepare students for creative activity and original research. A doctoral degree is awarded in recognition of a student's knowledge of a broad field of learning and for distinguished accomplishment in that field through an original contribution of significant knowledge. The dissertation must demonstrate a high level of critical ability, imagination and synthesis. In contrast to the master's degrees, there are no University unit requirements for the doctorate, although individual programs may set specific course requirements. However, students must complete at least four semesters of academic residence at UC Merced and successfully complete the course requirements before they are allowed to take the Qualifying Examination.

All students pursuing the Ph.D. degree must pass a Qualifying Examination before admission to candidacy. Students are expected to pass the Qualifying Examination before the beginning of their third year of graduate study unless they successfully petition the Graduate Council to take it at a specific later date. The intent of this examination is to ascertain the breadth of a student's comprehension of fundamental facts and principles that apply in their major field of study. It will also determine the student's ability to think critically about the theoretical and practical aspects of the field.

Students will be advanced to candidacy when they have done the following:

- Successfully completed the Qualifying Exam,
- Maintained a minimum grade point average of 3.0,
- Received incomplete grades in no more than two courses, and
- Fulfilled any language requirement associated with their program.

Once a student is advanced to candidacy it is imperative that he/she begin his/her dissertation studies promptly.