The master's degree represents the successful completion of at least a full academic year (two terms) of graduate work including some training in research.

Course Requirements
A minimum of eight course units is required for the master’s degree. Additional work may be prescribed in individual cases. Any student registered for the full amount of four course units may register as an auditor for one additional course with the permission of the graduate dean. No more than four course units in any one term may be counted toward the minimum requirement of eight course units. No course may be counted toward degree requirements if it has been used toward the requirements for more than one other degree.

Major Subject
A prospective candidate for a master's degree must complete at least four course units in the field of the major, and the work as a whole shall be directed by the chairperson of the graduate group concerned.

In the case of a research requirement (thesis, seminar, or laboratory course), the candidate shall also:

1. prepare a thesis in the field of the major subject; or
2. complete a course of research character or engage in supervised research, as the graduate group shall direct, which, in either case, shall be of at least one term in duration and shall include the preparation of at least one comprehensive scholarly or scientific paper.

A thesis or research paper based on joint work with other researchers is allowed, provided that, in such cases, a unique and separate document is presented by each degree candidate. The candidate must include a concise account of his or her contribution to the whole work. Authorship of a master's thesis or research paper by more than one degree candidate is not allowed.

If a thesis is required, two printed copies shall be deposited in the Graduate Division Office by the date specified in the degree calendar for that term. Specific information regarding the form in which the master’s thesis manuscripts are to be prepared must be obtained from the Graduate Division Office.

General Examination
A general examination by the graduate group in the major subject is required in addition to all other examinations. The purpose of this examination is to test the candidate's knowledge of his or her major subject in its broader aspects and proficiency in the particular courses he or she has taken. This examination may be oral, written, or both, at the discretion of the graduate group. The mere satisfaction of minimum requirements does not entitle the student to be admitted to this examination.

With the approval of the Graduate Council of the Faculties, the graduate group may substitute other assessment procedures for the general examination as a means of assuring that master's students have broad knowledge of the field.

Transfer of Credit
At least eight course units of the total program required for the master’s degree must be completed in a graduate program at the University of Pennsylvania or through an approved program at another school. Where more than eight course units are required, graduate work done at other universities may be accepted for the balance of the course requirements, if approved by the graduate dean. A student may transfer courses completed at other graduate schools of the University with the approval of the appropriate graduate dean. No work done as an undergraduate, whether done at this institution or at any other, will be counted toward a higher degree. (Graduate courses completed by an undergraduate as part of submatriculation in a graduate group count as graduate courses and, therefore, may be counted toward graduate degree requirements.)

Credit towards satisfaction of the minimum course requirements for a post-baccalaureate degree can be given for a maximum of four course units of work completed while registered in the College of Liberal and Professional Studies.

Time Limits
The minimum requirement of eight course units must be completed within six consecutive years with the understanding that one additional year will be allowed for the completion of a thesis if required.

Registration
Registration takes place in the fall and spring semesters. Research masters students who are candidates for an August degree remain full-time students through August 31st without summer registration.

Leave of Absence
A student who wishes a leave of absence must submit a written request to his or her graduate group chairperson for initial approval and then to the appropriate dean for final approval. The granting of a leave of absence does not automatically change the time limit. Time spent in military service does not count under the time limit.