GRADUATE DEGREES

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. In the event that there is a discrepancy between the GA and any other websites or publications, the GA shall prevail as the authoritative source.

Research Degrees

Research degrees are offered in seven of the eight schools at Rice, with some degrees combining studies in more than one school. Specific requirements for advanced research degrees in each field of study appear in the appropriate departmental pages (see Departments and Programs (ga.rice.edu/programs-study/departments-programs)). Students seeking additional material should contact the appropriate department (see Graduate Degree Chart (ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-opportunities/degree-chart)).

PhD Programs

The PhD degree is awarded for original studies in the departments listed in the Graduate Degree Chart (ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-opportunities/degree-chart); in architecture, the equivalent degree is the DArch; in music, the equivalent degree is the DMA. Candidates receive a PhD degree after successfully completing at least 90 semester hours of graduate study and concluding an original investigation that is formalized in an approved thesis. As final evidence of preparation for this degree, the candidate must pass a public oral examination and submit the approved thesis to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. (See also Candidacy, Oral Examinations and Thesis (ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-doctoral-degrees/#candidacy.) The residency requirement for the doctorate is four semesters of full-time study at the university.

Thesis Master’s Programs

The MA degree is available in the departments listed in the Graduate Degree Chart (ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-opportunities/degree-chart), including certain scientific fields of study. The MS degree is offered in the engineering and science fields also listed in the chart. Candidates may undertake the MArch, MArch in Urban Design, and MMus degrees as research degrees by adopting the thesis option. Candidates receive a master’s degree after completing at least 30 graduate semester hours of study at the 500 level and above (including thesis hours), 24 hours of which must be taken at Rice. Thesis Master’s programs require original work reported in a thesis and a public oral examination. Most students take three or four semesters to complete a master’s degree (some programs may require more time). Students receiving a master’s degree must be enrolled in a graduate program at Rice University for at least one fall or spring semester of full-time study.

Non-Thesis Master’s Programs

Students also may pursue a nonthesis degree in certain departments. This degree would be based on alternative departmental requirements and would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- At least 30 graduate semester hours of study
- At least 24 semester hours must be at Rice University
- Minimum residency is one fall or spring semester of full-time graduate study, with the exceptions of professional master’s programs in the schools of engineering, natural sciences, and social sciences, as well as the Master’s of Liberal Studies. For these programs, minimum residency is one fall or spring semester in full-time or part-time graduate study.
  - At least 30 hours of course work must be at or above the 500 level
  - All courses must be in the relevant field

In certain departments, students may receive a master’s degree when they achieve candidacy for the doctoral degree. Students seeking a master’s degree in this manner must submit a petition for the degree, signed by their department chair, to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies by the deadline specified in the official academic calendar (http://registrar.rice.edu/calendars) for degree conferral in the year in which the degree is to be awarded.

Professional Degrees

Rice University offers advanced degree programs to prepare students for positions in a number of professional fields. The professional degrees offered appear in the Graduate Degree Chart (ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-opportunities/degree-chart). In some departments, the professional degree also prepares the student for a doctoral-level program.

Requirements for professional degrees include the successful completion of 30 graduate semester hours or more of courses at the 500 level or higher with at least 24 hours taken at Rice. Minimum residency for professional master’s degrees in the schools of natural sciences and engineering, as well as the Master’s of Liberal Studies, is one fall or spring semester of either full-time or part-time study. For all other professional master’s degrees, minimum residency is one fall or spring semester of full-time study. All courses must be in the relevant field. Specific information and requirements for individual degrees appear in the Graduate Degree Chart (ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-opportunities/degree-chart). Program information and application materials also are available from the departments.

Institutional financial aid and tuition waivers are not available to professional master’s students. This should be stated in the department’s offer letter.