

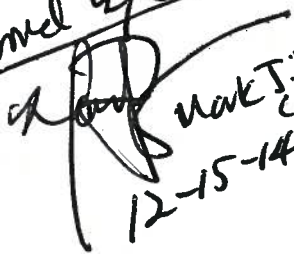
August 12, 2014



MEMORANDUM

TO: Karen Butler-Purry
Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies

FROM: John C. Criscione 
Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs

Approved by G.C.

Mark T. Zimmerman
Chair
12-15-14

SUBJECT: Exception request for MS non-thesis degree option in the Dwight Look College of Engineering

A number of departments in the Dwight Look College of Engineering (DLCOE) have had a Master of Science non-thesis degree option since the time when they established their respective Master of Science programs. A couple of other departments, which do not have the non-thesis option previously, are now planning to add the non-thesis degree option to their Master of Science programs. The non-thesis degree option requires a minimum 36 credit hours. As a non-thesis option, 691 (Research) is disallowed. Typically, a maximum of three hours of 692 (Professional Study) or 685 (Directed Study) is allowed.

As 691 is not allowed, the MS non-thesis option has been a coursework-only degree option with no research component. Some students may choose to do projects under 692, but the vast majority of students simply choose to complete 36 hours of regular course work. Given the lack of research, the final exam has become a standard test administered by a subset of faculty with content that has been tested already in courses.

We have decided that the value of having a final exam to re-examine course content is not commensurate with the faculty effort—effort that is thought to be applied better to evaluation of MS and PhD thesis research and doctoral qualifying exams. *The DLCOE therefore seeks approval to allow an exemption to the final exam requirement for M.S. non-thesis option students in all DLCOE departments.*

Coupled with this examination waiver is a proposed centralization of the student advisory committee. *We seek approval to adopt a committee of less than three members for the non-thesis option MS students.*

On the next page, we provide the proposed changes to the Graduate Catalog.

Please let me know if there is additional information that we might provide.

Proposed Graduate Catalog changes:

From the current catalog, page 62

Student's Advisory Committee

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework, the student will consult with the head of his or her major or administrative department (or intercollegiate faculty, if applicable) concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. With the exception of the Mays Business School non-thesis option, the Dwight Look College of Engineering non-thesis option, and the Master of Science for a student with a major in Educational Human Resource Development, HRD option, the student's advisory committee for the master's degree will consist of **no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty** representative of the student's fields of study and research. The chair or one of the co-chairs of the advisory committee must be from the student's major department (or intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), and **at least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student's major department**. The outside member for students in an intercollegiate program must have an appointment to a department different from the chair of the student's committee

From the current catalog, page 66

For non-thesis option students, a final comprehensive examination is required. The Master of Science in Educational Human Resource Development, HRD option, the Dwight Look College of Engineering Master of Science non-thesis option, and the Master of Science Program in the Mays Business School do not have final examination requirements. Otherwise, exemptions from final examinations are not allowed. The final exam cannot be held prior to the mid point of the semester if questions on the exam are based on courses in which the student is currently enrolled. If a student has completed all required degree plan coursework, the student is not required to be registered for classes in the semester the final examination is administered (unless he/she holds an assistantship).

From the current catalog, page 67

Non-Thesis Option

For the non-thesis option, a thesis is not required. A final comprehensive examination is required for all non-thesis Master of Science programs except the Master of Science programs offered by the Mays Business School, the Dwight Look College of Engineering non-thesis option, and the Master of Science with a major in Educational Human Resource Development, HRD option. No exemptions are allowed. The requirements as to level of courses and examinations are the same as for the thesis option Master of Science degree. The final examination cannot be held prior to the mid point of the semester if questions on the examination are based on courses in which the student is currently enrolled