HISTORY, MA

Admission Requirements

General requirements for all history degree programs

Admission decisions for all graduate history programs at The University of Alabama are made by the Graduate School based on a composite of subjective and quantitative information, including the applicant’s statement of purpose and letters of recommendation, the academic standing of the programs in which the applicant has studied, evidence of appropriate college or graduate-level work in history courses, test scores, previous grades, and the recommendation of the Graduate Committee of the history department. Each application is considered in the context of other applications to the program, with due consideration given to the availability of space in the program, the need to maintain a pool of students of superior potential, and the need to encourage minority applications. Not every student whose credentials meet stated quantitative standards is admitted.

Quantitative requirements for unconditional admission to MA program

The applicant must have a grade point average, based on a 4.0 system, of 3.0 overall or 3.0 for the last 60 semester hours in a degree program, and a score of at least 1500 on the combined verbal, quantitative and analytical portions of the Graduate Record Examination. Applicants who take the GRE after October 1, 2002, must score at least 1000 on the combined verbal and quantitative portions and at least 4 on the analytical writing section.

Quantitative requirements for conditional admission to MA program

An applicant whose credentials do not meet the requirements for regular admission may be considered for conditional admission if he or she has a quality point average of at least 2.5 overall and a score of 1400 on the GRE. For applicants who take the GRE after October 1, 2002, conditional admission will require a score of 930 on the combined verbal and quantitative portions and at least 4 on the analytical writing portion. Conditional admission is rare and requires a special recommendation by the Graduate Committee. Students admitted conditionally must maintain a 3.0 average for the first 12 semester hours attempted. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

General Degree Requirements

Course load

Resident students are expected to register for full loads each semester—at least 9 hours, except in the case of .50 FTE teaching assistants, who must take at least 6 hours. All courses must be numbered 500 or above, but HY 699 Dissertation Research does not count toward the course hour requirement for any graduate degree.

Historiography requirement

All incoming graduate students (MA or PhD), unless specifically exempted by the Graduate Committee, must take at least two of the basic historiography courses as part of their degree program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HY 601/602</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>HY 603</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>HY 605</td>
<td>4</td>
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They are encouraged to take these courses as early as possible in their program.

Seminar requirement

All MA students who choose Plan II (described under “Requirements for the MA Program” below) must take at least one research seminar. All doctoral students must complete at least two research seminars.

Language requirement

Unless specified to the contrary, all graduate degree programs in history require that each student demonstrate reading proficiency in one or more foreign languages. These languages should be selected from the standard research languages (Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Russian), but other languages relevant to the student’s program may be substituted with the recommendation of the student’s advisor and the permission of the Graduate Committee. The student must fulfill this requirement by passing the examination administered by the relevant language department at The University of Alabama. Completion of any of the various “language for reading proficiency” courses offered at The University of Alabama with a final grade of “B” or above also meets the language requirement.

Requirements for the MA Program

Plan I:

Coursework

Coursework totaling 24 credit hours in history and a thesis (an additional 6 credit hours of HY 599 Thesis Research) are required, and the student must demonstrate reading proficiency in one foreign language before taking the final oral examination.

Thesis

The topic of the thesis will be selected by the student in consultation with his or her advisor. After the topic has been agreed upon, the student will prepare a prospectus describing the topic and the proposed plan of approach, including the principal sources to be used. Copies of the prospectus will be distributed to the student’s advisory committee, which shall consist of three members, all of whom must indicate their acceptance of the topic.

Oral exam

The Plan I oral exam is on the MA coursework and the thesis. The examination committee consists of three professors who served as readers on the thesis, plus one additional history professor. The M.A. thesis must be submitted to the student’s primary advisor no later than six weeks before the scheduled defense, and the revised thesis must be submitted to the remaining members of the student’s committee at least three weeks before the scheduled defense. The committee files with the director of graduate studies a written opinion regarding the student’s suitability for further graduate work in history.

Plan II:

Coursework

Coursework totaling 30 credit hours in history is required, and the student must demonstrate proficiency in reading one foreign language before taking the final oral examination.

Oral exam

Plan II students must take an oral examination on their history courses and on a revised seminar paper, copies of which must be furnished to the members of the examining committee at least 10 days before the date
of the oral examination. The examining committee must consist of at least four history professors, including as many as possible with whom the student has taken courses. The committee files with the director of graduate studies a written opinion regarding the student’s suitability for further graduate work in history.

Special note on MA oral exams
In all of the MA oral examinations, two negative votes constitute failure of the examination. History graduate students may repeat failed oral examinations one time only, after an interval specified by the examining committee. Two negative votes constitutes denial of admission to the doctoral program. The use of faculty from outside the department to serve on MA examination committees (except in cases where faculty from other disciplines are prescribed by the graduate regulations) must be approved well in advance by the Graduate Committee.

Scholastic Requirements
Any student who receives 6 hours of “C” grades or 3 hours of “D” or “F” grades in history courses shall be dismissed from the program, although the student dismissed may petition the Graduate Committee for reinstatement.

A student on probation or whose transcript carries a grade of "I" will ordinarily be ineligible for a teaching assistantship or other departmental financial support.

Transfer of Credit
Courses of full-graduate level credit earned in an accredited institution where a student was enrolled in the graduate school may be submitted for review for inclusion in a History degree program. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until the student has enrolled in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Acceptance of credit requires the approval of the student’s advisor, the Graduate Committee of the Department of History, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Credit will not be accepted for transfer from any institution at which the student failed to achieve a “B” average on all of the graduate work attempted. Only courses in which a student earned a “B” grade or better may be transferred.

A student initiates with the Graduate School a request for evaluation of graduate credit obtained at another institution. The form is available at the “Web Forms” icon of the Graduate School’s homepage. It is also the student’s responsibility to ensure than an official transcript of the credit concerned is received by the Graduate School. All credit toward the MA degree must have been earned during the six years immediately preceding the date on which the degree is awarded. All credit toward the PhD must have been earned in the six years immediately preceding admission to the doctoral program.

The history department usually allows the transfer of 6 semester hours of credit toward the MA degree, although in exceptional cases up to 12 hours may be accepted. No more than one-half of PhD coursework hours (not including HY 699) may be transferred from another institution.

Master’s Degrees
The primary purpose of master’s degree programs is to provide students with subject matter at an advanced level in their fields of study. Master’s degrees are designed to assist students either to continue their graduate studies or to meet the goals of their professions. In most cases, master’s programs also help students become familiar with methods of independent investigation.

Program Requirements
Two plans are offered for the master’s degree:

Plan I. Candidates for the master’s degree under Plan I must earn a minimum of 24 semester hours of credit in coursework plus earn a minimum of 6 additional hours of thesis research hours, for a total of 30 hours.

Plan II. Candidates for the master’s degree under Plan II must earn a minimum of 30 semester hours of coursework credit and pass the comprehensive examination or complete a culminating or “capstone experience” as described under the Comprehensive Examinations section below.

Both plans require a minimum of 18 semester hours in the major subject. With the approval of the major department, the remainder of the coursework may be completed in either the major or a related field.

In some divisions and in many departments of the University, candidates are required to do their work under Plan I. Candidates working under Plan II may be required to participate successfully in seminar or problem courses that will give them an acquaintance with the methods of research and an appreciation of the place and function of original investigation in the field.

Residency Requirements
A student’s program at the master’s level must provide sufficient association with the resident faculty to permit individual evaluation of the student’s capabilities and achievements.

Graduate Credit
A student must be admitted to the Graduate School and must register as a graduate student in order to receive graduate credit. Approval for graduate registration must be obtained from program advisors prior to registration.

Graduate Credit for Noncredit Experiences
All course credit used toward a UA graduate degree must be taught at the graduate level. No graduate credit may be earned by correspondence study or for experiential learning not conducted under the direct supervision of graduate faculty of The University of Alabama. The UA does not offer graduate credit for noncredit workshops, seminars, continuing education experiences, professional development, internships, work/life experience, and so forth.

Transfer of Credit
Courses of full graduate-level credit earned in a regionally accredited institution where a student was enrolled in the graduate school may be submitted for review for inclusion in a master’s degree program. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until after the student has enrolled in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Acceptance of credit requires the approval of the student’s advisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School. Credit will not be accepted for transfer from any institution at which the student failed to achieve a “B” average on all graduate work attempted. Only courses in which a student earned a “B” grade or better may be transferred.

In some cases, foreign educational credentials may not meet the Graduate School’s criteria for transfer of credit. It may be necessary for students in this situation to secure an evaluation of their credentials from World Education Services Inc. (WES), an external foreign credential evaluation service. Additional information on their services can be found at their website.
A student initiates at the Graduate School’s website a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit earned at another institution. It is also the student’s responsibility to assure that the Graduate School receives an official transcript of the credit requested for transfer, well in advance of the final semester.

With the approval of the student’s department and the dean of the Graduate School, the greater of 12 hours or 25 percent of the required coursework for a master’s degree may be transferred from another institution. All credit toward the master’s degree, including transfer credit, must have been earned during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the master’s degree is to be awarded. Revalidation (recertification) of graduate credits that will be more than 18 semesters old at the time of UA master’s program completion is not an option.

Please note that some departments allow fewer than 12 hours of graduate transfer credit. Be sure to check with your department’s graduate coordinator regarding your department’s transfer policy.

400-Level Courses

A maximum of 6 semester hours of 400-level course credit may be accepted for a master’s degree program, but only if a form for Approval of 400-Level Course Work for Master’s Credit is approved by the Graduate School prior to the semester in which the 400-level coursework will be taken.

Time Limit

All requirements for the master’s degree must be completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. There is no provision for an extension of the time limit beyond 6 years for master’s students.

Admission to Candidacy

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Graduate Council eliminated the master’s candidacy requirement. Departments may monitor master’s candidacy if they wish, but the Graduate School does not monitor it and will not accept master’s candidacy forms. Doctoral candidacy is not affected and remains an important doctoral program requirement.

Thesis

A thesis evidencing research capacity, independent thought, and the ability to interpret materials is required of all master’s degree candidates who pursue Plan I. The subject chosen must be in the major field and must be approved by the graduate committee of the major department or school and by the head of the student’s major department or division.

The final oral thesis defense is the culminating experience in the master’s program. As such, all members of the thesis committee are expected to attend and participate in real time. Virtual attendance via interactive video or teleconference is permitted for off-campus external committee members, but Tuscaloosa campus faculty should attend in person unless extraordinary circumstances dictate the need for virtual attendance.

Article Style vs. Journal Format

Article Style.

At the doctoral level, “article-style dissertations” are unified works that include several distinct but related studies of research or creative activity, each of which is of publishable quality. The University does not permit an “article-style thesis” to be presented for a master’s degree.

Journal Format.

A “journal-format thesis” is acceptable. Such a thesis follows the format of a particular journal in which the student and advisor want the thesis to be published. To prepare a journal-format thesis, the student uses the journal’s “information for authors” or similarly titled guidelines in conjunction with the Graduate School’s Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations.

A thesis committee must consist of at least three members appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. A form for Appointment or Change of Master’s Thesis Committee is used to request that the graduate dean appoint a thesis committee. The request normally is made as soon as the successful defense of the thesis proposal has been completed. All members of the thesis committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty. The Committee Chair must be a full or associate member of the Graduate Faculty. One member must be from outside the student’s major department. If the outside member is not a full or associate member of the UA Graduate Faculty (e.g., a highly qualified person from another university, a business or industry), the graduate dean needs to appoint that member by approving Temporary Graduate Faculty status for the specific purpose of serving on the student’s thesis committee. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances meriting approval by the graduate dean before the final oral defense of the thesis, all members of the thesis committee must attend the defense.

The candidate must give members of the examining committee a minimum of two weeks to read the thesis before the date of the final oral examination. A final oral examination is required of all students completing a thesis. All members of the thesis committee must be members of the UA graduate faculty and must attend the final oral examination unless there are extraordinary circumstances warranting the graduate dean’s approval of the absence prior to the defense meeting.

As of August 15, 2009, all theses are submitted electronically rather than on paper. See the graduate school’s homepage for a link to information on Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) for details.

Theses must comply with the regulations set out in A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations, available on the Graduate School’s website. Approval of the thesis by the graduate dean is necessary before graduation.

The thesis should be completed, if possible, while the student is in residence at the University. To request permission to complete a thesis in absentia, the student must, before leaving the University, submit a satisfactory outline of the thesis, as well as evidence that adequate facilities are available where the work will be done, to the head of the student’s major department.

Protection of Human Subjects for Research

Scientific research involving human subjects has produced substantial benefits for society, but it also can pose troubling ethical questions. The mission of the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects is to ensure that research involving human subjects is conducted ethically. University and federal policies require that review and approval to use human subjects in research precede the research. In the case of thesis research that involves the use of human subjects in any way, the principal investigator is responsible for contacting the college Human Research Review Committee to obtain approval for the planned research.

Comprehensive Examinations

In addition to the regular course examinations, a final comprehensive examination representing a “culminating” or “capstone” experience for a degree is required of all candidates for the master’s degree (except for those candidates pursuing the master of accountancy, the master of business administration, the master of library and information studies, the master of social work, and the master of tax accounting). The
comprehensive examination is a culminating experience in which the student is expected to integrate prior learning. Each department, with approval of the Graduate Council, determines the most appropriate format. The various exams may consist of one or more of the following:

- a written and/or oral examination based on the content of the degree program;
- a thesis and final oral defense;
- a course requiring interpretation and integration of information from previous courses;
- a research paper, a "policy and practice" paper, or equivalent experience;
- a public performance or exhibition along with a contextualizing paper; and/or
- a practicum or internship.

If the comprehensive exam requirement is met with option 1 and/or 2 above, then the examining committee for comprehensive examinations must consist of at least three members of the graduate faculty from that department and appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. The examination must be given at least six weeks before the date of graduation (two weeks before for Plan II) and reported promptly to the dean of the Graduate School on appropriate forms. A final report, on the Master's/EdS Examination Form is on the Graduate School website. The form should be submitted when all examinations are completed. A student may take the final oral or written examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

Application for Graduation

Each candidate for a master's degree must apply for graduation through myBama no later than the registration period for the semester or the first session of the summer term in which requirements for the degree are to be completed.

Second Master's Degree

Six (6) semester hours of eligible credit from one master's degree at The University of Alabama may be applied to the requirements for a second master's degree, but only if the department of the second master's agrees to the courses in the plan of study. Any hours from the previous master's degree must have been earned during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the second degree is to be awarded. ***Please note that if a student double counts six hours between two master's degrees, no hours may double count toward any additional master's degrees.