At the University of California, Master’s degree programs include a “capstone” requirement (as embodied in the dissertation for doctoral degrees) that is essential in maintaining the distinctive, research-oriented quality of a UC graduate degree and to integrate the intellectual substance of the program and also as a means of quality control. The norm for a capstone requirement is a thesis or for a comprehensive examination completed at or near the end of the coursework for the Master’s degree. Master’s degrees are offered as either “Plan I” (capstone is a thesis/project) or “Plan II” (capstone is a comprehensive final examination). For the chosen option, it is essential to describe how the success or failure of the student in meeting the capstone requirement will be evaluated by a committee appointed according to the Policy on Service on Advanced Degree Committees GC1998-01, as well as providing information concerning how the committee that will evaluate the student’s capstone requirement is assembled.

The UC Davis Graduate Council gives the following examples of options for a Master’s Plan II degree.

a. Comprehensive written exam at the end of spring quarter year 1, with an oral exam at end of year 2 for all students to ensure comprehensive capstone testing.

b. Comprehensive written exam at the end of spring quarter year 1, with a capstone written report at the end of year 2 on an appropriately comprehensive topic.

c. Comprehensive written exam in winter quarter of year 2, with a 2nd chance for those students who fail being an oral exam in spring quarter of year 2.

d. Comprehensive written exam at the end of spring quarter year 2, with no option to retake the exam if a student fails.

e. Capstone written report on an appropriately comprehensive topic at the end of year 2.

Alternative procedures can be proposed by a graduate group and they will be examined on a case by case basis by the EPC subcommittee of GC. However, it is of paramount importance than any alternative procedure proposed satisfy the regulations as encoded in the CCGA handbook (Appendix K, page 34, of http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/ccga/ccgahandbook.pdf) as well as this policy.