MASTER’S DEGREE REGULATIONS
University of Wisconsin-Madison – Department of Statistics

1. The objective of the Master’s Degree requirement is to satisfy the Department that the candidate has the potential to be a practicing statistician, it being understood that a practicing statistician must also have a proper grasp of statistical theory.

2. The Master's Degree program and the Ph.D. program are distinct. The student can obtain a Ph.D. without first obtaining a Master’s Degree. A Master’s Degree is regarded as evidence of having the skills of a practicing statistician. It confers a specific status on the recipient and it is hoped that most students will obtain a Master's Degree, regardless of whether or not they proceed to a Ph.D.

3. The requirements for a Master’s Degree in Statistics are:
   (a) Satisfaction of University requirements.
   (b) Adequate course performance; see (4).
   (c) Passing a competency test of the candidate’s potential as a practicing statistician (again bearing in mind that this may include testing of theoretical competence).

4. Course Requirements

   There are five required courses:

   State 609 or 709, 610 or 710, 849, 850, and 998.

   In addition, the student must complete six elective credits, selected from the following courses:


   The student must obtain a grade of B or higher in every course used to satisfy the M.S. degree requirement.

5. Competency Test

   After the candidate successfully completes 998 or the semester in which 998 is taken, the candidate must demonstrate to an examining committee of the faculty the potential to be a practicing statistician. The committee is given latitude to decide the details on each occasion as to how this will be done. However, the general form of the examination will be as follows:

   (a) The candidate will be presented with one or more written problems or projects and asked to provide a brief written report involving a suitable statistical analysis seven days later.

   (b) After a further period of time, not to exceed ten days, the candidate will go before a Committee of faculty members for an oral examination based on questions arising from the above problems or projects. It is understood that the area of questioning may be extended to cover additional aspects of the candidate’s theoretical or practical background on which satisfaction of competence is considered desirable by the committee.
6. The M.S. degree examination will be the responsibility of a committee of faculty members (usually four) appointed by the faculty. Typically, the appointment will be for two years and half the committee will be reappointed each year to provide overlap and continuity.

7. A candidate may attempt the competency test at most twice. If a candidate initially attempts the M.S. degree exam in the fall and does not pass, a second attempt must be made in the following spring or fall. If a candidate initially attempts the M.S. degree exam in the spring and does not pass, a second attempt must be made in the following fall or spring. A candidate desiring to take this exam must register with the Examination Committee prior to the exam date. Picking up the exam constitutes an attempt regardless of whether or not the examination is submitted for grading.