



Department of Anthropology

**MA Program
Graduate Student Manual**

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MA QUICK GUIDE

- 24 credits of coursework (21 credits at 600 level), including Anth 629 & Anth 652. Six credits ANTH 699 thesis
- 30 credits total
- One language or one research tool
- Written comprehensive exam
- Approved thesis proposal
- Advancement to Candidacy (at least one semester before graduation)
- Written thesis with public oral defense
- Maintain good standing with 3.0 GPA or better
- Time limit: 7 years to degree

GENERAL INFORMATION

The M.A. degree in anthropology is an advanced degree that may either lead to further study in a Ph.D. program or to work in a professional career. The department expects that most applicants for the M.A. degree either hold a B.A. or B.S. degree in anthropology or have had an equivalent of at least fifteen semester credit hours in anthropology along with an undergraduate degree in another field. In the latter case, the normal expectation is that the applicant has successfully completed lower division courses in three of the four subfields of anthropology (archaeology, physical/biological anthropology, social/cultural anthropology, and linguistics), two of which are at an advanced undergraduate level.

Exceptions may be granted under certain circumstances. If the faculty are uncertain about the student's prior academic preparation, they may require the student to take several undergraduate courses without graduate credit and/or additional graduate courses beyond those normally required for the M.A. degree to remedy deficiencies in their background. The precise requirements will be developed by the student's Advisory Committee and recorded in the student's file. Whenever remedial work is indicated, the student should be prepared to spend an extra semester or two in earning the degree.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We offer approximately 10 to 15 Graduate Teaching Assistantships each semester on a competitive basis with students ranked by multiple variables (GPA, timely progress toward degree, previous TA performance, etc.). Renewal is not automatic: new and continuing students must reapply EACH SEMESTER for a TAship and will be re-ranked for funding at that time. TA applications for new and returning students are available on the [anthropology website](#). Applications must be received by the Anthropology Department by October 15 to be eligible for a spring TA award and by March 15 to be eligible for a Fall TA award. These departmental

deadlines are different from those listed on other UAF web sites.

Information about competitive scholarships available to all UAF graduate students can be found on the Graduate School web page or through the Anthropology Department's Financial Aid links. Students are encouraged to apply for a variety of scholarships and fellowships, and should work closely with their Advisory Committee members to develop proposals and applications.

All students are encouraged to apply for various sources of funding including opportunities outside UAF. Information on funding opportunities is posted on the departmental bulletin board, disseminated by email, available from the UAF Proposal Office and through the department website. Faculty will assist students in developing competitive funding proposals. Ph.D. students are expected to apply to national funding agencies to fund their dissertation research. Obtaining funding for the write-up phase is also encouraged.

MA PROGRAM DURATION, LEAVES AND READMISSION

Official degree requirements for the M.A. degree are stipulated in the [University General Catalog](#). The UAF Regulations state (see General Catalog) that all requirements for the M.A. degree must be completed within a seven-year time period. The faculty expect that, in the normal course of events, a student with an adequate background in anthropology at the undergraduate level will complete all the requirements for an M.A. degree in two to three academic years. Readmission after expiration of the seven-year limit is possible only under exceptional circumstances and only with the concurrence of the student's Advisory Committee and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. All applications for extensions or readmission must also be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

GRADUATE STUDY PLAN

The Advisory Committee must meet with the student during the first year to develop a [Graduate Study Plan](#). At this time, the committee determines if any deficiencies exist and provides direction to the student for carrying out remedial work. Later meetings are held to update the study plan and discuss progress. The student must file the Graduate Study Plan with the Graduate School by the end of the first academic year. Students should consult sections of the General Catalog on Graduate Advisory Committees and Graduate Study Plans for further details.

STUDENT FILE

The UAF Graduate School website contains the forms which constitute the body of official

documents for a student's file. The student is responsible for ensuring that all required forms are submitted on time. The Graduate Studies Coordinator and the Chair of the Advisory Committee may assist students in this matter. The Graduate School maintains student files. The Graduate School offers training on the use of the NextGen forms and accessing the completed forms that are on record in the student's file.

ANNUAL EVALUATION

Graduate School regulations require that a student's performance be evaluated by the Advisory Committee at the end of each academic year. Such evaluations are completed by the Advisory Committee Chair in consultation with the faculty. The evaluation is based on the student's overall performance in coursework, research, and as a teaching or research assistant (when applicable). The report will specify the student's progress as "satisfactory," "conditional," or "unsatisfactory." The evaluation form ([Report of Advisory Committee](#)) must be signed by the Advisory Committee and then shared promptly with the student. The student must initial each completed section and sign the form to indicate their review. As a required attachment to the form, the student must submit a brief narrative self-evaluation as per the instructions under "Student Responsibilities" on page 1 of the form. The signed form and attached student evaluation is then routed for additional signatures from the Anthropology Department Chair, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and Director of the Graduate School. Students should retain a copy of each annual report for their records.

If a student receives a "conditional" evaluation, the Advisory Committee will specify the conditions to be met and a timeline for completion. Failure to meet the specified conditions will result in an unsatisfactory rating on the next evaluation. Two consecutive unsatisfactory reports will result in dismissal from the program.

MA COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

PRIMARY ADVISOR (COMMITTEE CHAIR). Students will be assigned an interim advisor with whom they will meet during the first semester. A permanent advisor should be chosen as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the second semester. This person will serve as the Chair of the Advisory Committee. While the Advisory Committee Chair will assist with identifying possible committee members, it is the student's responsibility to meet with other faculty to discuss their potential service on the committee. When the committee is formed, the student and Advisory Committee Chair will file the [Appointment of Advisory Committee](#) form with the Graduate School.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Advisory Committees set requirements and guide students through

their programs of study and research. Students are responsible for arranging meetings and consultations with their Advisory Chair and other committee members and for arranging periodic meetings of the Advisory Committee. The student should set a meeting with the committee by the end of the second semester at the latest. Students may wish to change their Advisory Committee Chair or a member of their committee during the course of their studies. To do so, a student must first notify their Chair and then file a new [Appointment of Advisory Committee](#) form, showing the change(s) with required signatures.

UAF Regulations specify that an M.A. student's Advisory Committee is to be composed of a minimum of three members. The Advisory Committee Chair (or co-chair) must be a faculty member in the UAF Department of Anthropology. [Affiliate faculty](#) are also eligible to serve on advisory committees, including as co-chair. Additional committee members may be faculty in the Department of Anthropology, faculty in other UAF departments, or may be from outside of UAF if approved by the Anthropology department chair, CLA Dean, and Graduate School Director. Additionally, a fourth member may be appointed from either within or outside of the University of Alaska system.

MA COURSE REQUIREMENTS

M.A. students must complete a minimum of 30 credits as outlined in the [General Catalog](#) (24 credits of coursework: 21 credits at 600 level and 6 credits of ANTH-699 Thesis).

REQUIRED COURSES. All M.A. students must successfully complete the following (included as part of the 24 credits):

- Anth 629 Structures of Anthropological Argument
- Anth 652 Research Design and Professional Development Seminar

LANGUAGE OR RESEARCH TOOL

M.A. students are required to demonstrate competency in one language relevant to their academic interests OR competency in a research tool (such as statistics or field methods). The language or research tool requirement is designed to help M.A. students complete their research and write their thesis. The student will consult with their Advisory Committee to determine which language or tool is appropriate for their thesis research and how they will satisfy this requirement. This information forms part of the Graduate Study Plan (see above).

The foreign language or research tool is decided by the student in consultation with their Advisory Committee. A research tool may be a particular quantitative or qualitative method

(e.g., discourse analysis), a particular analytical technique (e.g. statistics), audio/video transcription and coding software (such Transana or Elan), Geographic Information System software (such as ArcGIS), or another appropriate tool.

Language proficiency will be determined by an examination in a format agreed upon by the Advisory Committee. Typically, a student is expected to translate an article in the language and area of specialization appropriate to their field OR translate a passage from a text in a 1-2 hour exam (with a dictionary). Alternatively, the Advisory Committee may permit passing a language proficiency exam at a level equivalent to 2 years of university language study to fulfill the language requirement. Proficiency in a particular research tool will be determined by an examination in a format agreed upon by the Advisory Committee.

Completion of this requirement should be filed using the [Report on Language/Research Tool](#) form.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

M.A. students typically complete the comprehensive exam during the third semester of full-time graduate study. The topics of the exam will be decided by the Advisory Committee in consultation with the student and will be concentrated in the student's subfield(s). The aim of the exam is to test general competence in the broad subject areas of the student's training and is therefore not specifically tied to the student's research project. The exam will consist of three questions and will be given out on a specified Friday (second week of November) and due the next Monday (72 hours). Exam answers are limited to 5000 words maximum for each question. Students will not know the questions in advance of the exam. However, in preparation for the exams, the student will work with their Advisory Committee to reach agreement about a bibliography that will allow for a robust scholarly response to each question.

If the student fails to pass the exam, the committee has the option to create a new exam. This new exam should be taken not earlier than six weeks and not later than one year after the original. If the student fails to pass a second time, the committee will decide whether the student is to continue in the program.

A [Report on Comprehensive Exam](#) will be signed by the Advisory Committee after the comprehensive exam is approved. A student is eligible to apply for advancement to candidacy after passing the comprehensive exam *and* obtaining approval of their thesis proposal from the Advisory Committee.

THESIS PROPOSAL

Each student is expected to prepare a written research proposal in their subfield(s). The

research proposal should be a clear statement of the research problem and its significance. The proposal should reflect a thorough literature review that addresses the general area of the research problem. The student should explain the methodology or research strategy that will be employed in researching the topic, and this should also be substantiated with references to relevant literature. The written proposal will be reviewed and approved by the student's Advisory Committee. When the Advisory Committee approves the proposal, the student must submit the signed [Proposal Approval form](#) to the Graduate Studies Coordinator and the Department Administrative Assistant.

The thesis proposal should demonstrate the following:

1. Mastery of relevant anthropological theories and concepts in the field as demonstrated in problem statement and literature review:
 - a. Are the arguments coherent and clear?
 - b. Are the objectives well defined?
 - c. Does the proposal demonstrate mature, refined critical thinking skills?
 - d. Does the literature review demonstrate appropriate depth and mastery of the relevant theories and/or theoretical concepts?
 - e. Does the proposal generate well-reasoned and well supported research questions and/or hypotheses?
2. Mastery of research methods - data collection procedures:
 - a. Is the overall research design appropriate to the proposed study?
 - b. Are the sources of primary and secondary data clearly specified?
 - c. Are the data collection procedures clearly and sufficiently explained?
 - d. Are the research methods appropriate to the research questions and/or hypotheses?
 - e. Does the proposal demonstrate regulatory compliance (if applicable)?
3. Mastery of research methods – data analysis procedures:
 - a. Are data analysis procedures clearly and sufficiently explained?
 - b. Are the analysis procedures appropriate to the types of data collected?
 - c. Does the analysis go beyond the obvious, acknowledging limitations and critically considering alternatives?
4. Quality of Writing:
 - a. Does the proposal utilize an appropriate academic writing style (i.e. a style that is formal, cohesive, and cogent, one that employs precise word choices, clear language, logical organization, and appropriate grammar/spelling)?
5. Originality and potential for contribution to the discipline of anthropology:
 - a. Does the proposal demonstrate potential for discovery?
 - b. Does the proposal extend previous work on the topic or related topics?
 - c. Does the proposal demonstrate theoretical and/or applied significance?
 - d. Does the proposal demonstrate publication potential?

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

With advancement to candidacy, the department certifies that the student's thesis proposal has been approved, that the Comprehensive Exam has been passed, that the language or research tool requirement has been met, that all course deficiencies have been remedied, and that all remaining requirements have been spelled out in the Graduate Study Plan. The form for [Advancement to Candidacy](#) must be completed and turned in no later than the *semester before* a student plans to graduate.

MA THESIS AND DEFENSE

It is expected that by the end of their first year in the program the student will have defined a thesis topic. The student will be guided in completion of the thesis by their Advisory Committee, with primary responsibility resting with the Advisory Committee Chair.

The thesis must be at least 14,000 words in length and not more than 50,000 words (excluding bibliography, figures, tables and appendices). Upon approval of the written draft by the Advisory Committee, the student will present and defend their thesis in a session open to the public known as the defense.

The student must submit the [Defense Approval Form](#) to the Graduate Studies Coordinator and the department administrative assistant *at least 3 weeks in advance* of the scheduled defense. The information will be shared with students, faculty and department webpage and social media managers for public advertising. This process ensures that all faculty and students are aware of the upcoming defense. Students must also create and post flyers to advertise the event (the departmental administrative assistant will provide students access to the photocopier). The flyer should include the presentation title, abstract, as well as the date, time, and location of the defense. If the defense will be held online in Zoom, the zoom link should not be advertised publicly (to avoid zoom-bombing), but rather members of the public should be advised regarding who to contact (name and email address) to obtain a Zoom join link and passcode. Students are encouraged to share a pdf file of their flyer with the Graduate Studies Coordinator and department administrative assistant at the same time as they submit the Defense Approval Form. Students are required to advertise a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the defense. The information will be shared with students, faculty and department webpage and social media managers for public advertising. Students must also submit the [Public Defense Announcement Submission Form](#) to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to their defense date. If the process is not followed, the student **WILL NOT** be allowed to defend and the defense will be postponed until the advertising requirement has been met.

THESIS DEFENSE TIMELINE

THESIS DRAFT SUBMISSION. The final draft of the thesis should be submitted to the committee for approval at least **THREE WEEKS** before the planned thesis defense.

SCHEDULE DEFENSE. When the Advisory Committee approves the thesis draft for defense, the student should contact the department administrative assistant to identify available time slots for the defense (preferably on a Friday at 3:00 PM, the typical time slot for anthropology colloquium). The student must also submit a signed [Defense Approval Form](#) and publicly advertise their defense for a minimum of 2 weeks (see above) or they will not be allowed to defend until the advertising requirement has been met. Defenses must occur during the regular academic year (typically mid August to early May). Exceptions must be approved by a majority vote of the faculty. Students must also submit the [Public Defense Announcement Submission Form](#) to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to their defense date. This process ensures that all faculty and students are aware of the upcoming defense. Students must also create and post flyers to advertise the event (the departmental administrative assistant will provide students access to the photocopier). The flyer should include the presentation title, abstract, as well as the date, time, and location of the defense. If the defense will be held online in Zoom, the zoom link should not be advertised publicly (to avoid zoom-bombing), but rather members of the public should be advised regarding who to contact (name and email address) to obtain Zoom information. Students are encouraged to share a pdf file of their flyer with the Graduate Studies Coordinator and department administrative assistant at the same time as they submit the Defense Approval Form.

DEFENSE. As specified in the General Catalog, the defense will consist of a presentation by the candidate. The candidate should work with their Advisory Committee to file a [Report on Dissertation/Thesis/Project Defense form](#). The length of the presentation will be determined by the Advisory Committee (typically 35-45 minutes). Following the student's presentation, there will be a question period. The Advisory Committee Chair will facilitate the defense meeting and the Chair and members of the Advisory Committee will conduct the questioning. In conclusion of the public portion of the defense, the Chair, as a rule, will open the questioning to the public.

EVALUATION OF DEFENSE. Following the public portion of the defense, the Advisory Committee will meet in closed session to pass or fail the student on their defense. The student may be advised on revisions the committee deems necessary. The student will then submit the revised thesis for the committee's final approval in accordance with UAF Regulations. These regulations are set out in the General Catalog, and a [Thesis Formatting and Submission Handbook](#) should be obtained from the Graduate School. Students must conform to thesis format requirements and to thesis submission deadlines as specified. Discuss with your committee which citation style guide (Chicago, MLA, APA, etc.) is best for you.

FINAL THESIS. The thesis must be prepared in accordance with the Graduate School's thesis requirements. Once the final draft has been approved in the proper format a pdf version must be submitted to the department office. Students attempting to graduate in the semester of the defense must plan in advance:

- [Apply for graduation](#)
- Allow appropriate time after the defense for revisions and final formatting
- Defense date (with post-defense time for preparing the final document) should take into account the following deadlines (i.e., defenses typically take place in September/October for Fall and January/February for Spring graduations)
 - Final thesis due to CLA mid-November or mid-March
 - Final thesis due to Graduate School late November or early April

PROGRESS WITH GOOD STANDING

To remain in good standing in the department, the student must maintain a 3.0 GPA or better, must meet with the interim advisor at least once per semester until the Advisory Committee Chair is designated, must designate an Advisory Committee Chair no later than the end of the second semester, and must assemble a full committee and select a research topic no later than the end of the second semester. Any student failing to meet these milestones must explain why in their annual report. Receiving departmental funding (T.A., R.A.) is contingent upon remaining in good standing. Students who fail to remain in good standing will be placed on probation for one semester, and asked to correct the problems. Students who do not correct the problems after one semester will be dropped from the program. The Graduate School requires that students be enrolled each semester they are active in the program. If a student fails to register for a semester without a leave of absence, they will have to **reapply to the Graduate School to reinstate their status.**

GENERAL POLICIES

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES. Students may feel, as individuals or as a group, that they have a grievance against another student, a faculty member, the department, or the school. If such circumstances arise, it is suggested that the matter be openly and frankly discussed in consultations with faculty members, the Graduate Student Representative, and the Department Head. Depending on the nature of the problem, one or the other may be able to mediate the matter and resolve the grievance. If the matter is not resolved, the student has a right to bring up the matter officially in a faculty meeting, before the faculty as a whole. Students may also request a meeting with individual faculty members, or faculty members and other students. If departmental policy is implicated, the faculty as a whole may need to arrive at a decision. If a grievance is not satisfactorily resolved within the department,

students are referred to the Office of the Graduate School.

STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION. In our department, faculty work closely with graduate students and most faculty members maintain an "open door" policy. From time to time students request individual faculty members to write recommendations either for study elsewhere or in applying for a job, research or training grant, summer institute, language school, and so on. Normally the faculty respond promptly to such requests. However, to facilitate the process, it is desirable that the student provide the faculty member with curriculum vitae, a stamped and addressed envelope (if applicable), information about the institution or job for which the recommendation is needed, and any required forms well in advance of deadlines. Faculty who provide students with recommendations would appreciate hearing the results of the student's applications.

DEPARTMENT COLLOQUIUM SERIES. During the academic year, the department organizes a variety of colloquium events for which it typically brings in outside speakers. These events are open to the public and represent an excellent opportunity to learn more about anthropology across the subfields, to be inspired by what others are doing, and to interact with scholars from around the world. Graduate students are expected to attend regularly.

STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS. All students are strongly encouraged to present their research at an informal departmental venue and seek feedback prior to presenting their work at a local, national, or international conference.

ETHICS IN RESEARCH. Students are encouraged to conduct field research. It is especially important for anthropology students to remember that research on human subjects is regulated by federal law and agency regulations, and is subject to review by the [UAF Institutional Review Board](#). All proposals, including those for summer research, are reviewed by the faculty with this in mind. IRB Approval in all cases must be secured before research commences. This applies to even seemingly innocuous situations. A statement on the use of human subjects is required in which potential harm is discussed, as well as means to avoid or minimize any such potential harm. This statement must be signed by the proposed investigator. The student should specify the proposed methods, such as participant observation, questionnaire, interview schedules, and so forth. A consent form for study participants is also typically required. Informal consultations with the faculty on this aspect of anthropological research are encouraged. Students must adhere to professional ethics guidelines. Students are also responsible for obtaining the appropriate permits and permissions from communities, agencies and others who may be involved in or affected by their research.

GRADUATE STUDENT OFFICE SPACE. Office space in the department is limited, and priority is given to teaching assistants and Ph.D. students. Space will be allocated on a year-by-year basis with no automatic renewals. Students must see the Graduate Studies Coordinator for a

space assignment. Library carrels are also available and can be applied for at the Rasmuson Library Circulation Desk. Students who are not in residence on campus should not expect to be assigned space in the department.

GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION. Graduate students may organize and elect a Graduate Student Representative who reports to the faculty, usually through the Department Head and/or in faculty meetings, the students' concerns, plans and interests. From time to time, a departmental student/faculty meeting may be called by the Department Head to address common concerns. The Graduate Student Representative is also responsible for calling meetings of the graduate students to organize educational and/or social activities. There are opportunities to invite guest speakers (periodically funded by the Graduate School) and to hold special events (such as a film screening, a holiday potluck, or a joint graduate/undergraduate social gathering). Graduate students also typically assist with the Alaska Anthropological Association Meetings, which are hosted in Fairbanks on a rotating basis.

FORMS. There are numerous forms that students are required to submit or that need to be submitted on their behalf during the course of their studies. The most common and important forms are available on the [Graduate School forms webpage](#), while others may be internal to the Department of Anthropology (such as the Defense Approval form). The Graduate School has implemented an electronic forms system called NextGen. Students, faculty, and administrative assistants are able to initiate forms. Students should consult with their Advisory Committee chair prior to initiating forms.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. More information about the UAF Department of Anthropology can be found online at <http://www.uaf.edu/anthro>. This website includes links to other UAF online sources, including the General Catalog, Admissions, and Financial Aid. The UAF Graduate School forms and Thesis Format Workbook can be found online at <http://www.uaf.edu/gradsch/forms.html>.

CHECKLIST

- Maintain good standing with 3.0 GPA or better
- Students must apply for a temporary [leave of absence](#) if not registered for classes
 - Leaves are granted for a maximum of one year
 - If a student is not registered for credits without/following leave, the Graduate School requires an [application](#) for reinstatement to graduate status
- 30 credits (time limit: 7 years to degree)
 - 24 credits course work (21 credits at 600 level)
 - ANTH 629 and ANTH 652
 - 6 credits ANTH 699 thesis
- [Graduate Study Plan](#) (and [supplement](#), if needed): Completed in first semester

- [Appointment of Advisory Committee](#): Completed in first year
- [Annual Report of Advisory Committee](#) on student progress: completed at least annually
 - Failure to meet target deadlines must be explained here (e.g., postponing comps)
 - Graduate School funding eligibility is based on annual report submission
- [One language OR one research tool](#): completed prior to candidacy
- Written [comprehensive exam](#): completed during second year
 - Offered each year the second week in November
- Submit [MA Proposal Approval form](#), typically prepared in the second semester of the first year
 - The required Research Design and Professional Development Seminar is aimed at helping students complete a proposal prior to summer data collection
- [Advancement to Candidacy](#) (at least one semester before graduation)
 - All requirements except the thesis defense have to be met prior to advancement
- Thesis: typically at the end of the second year
 - Theses must be defended during the academic year (September through April).
 - Theses must be advertised a minimum of **two weeks** prior to the defense date
 - Students must submit a signed [Defense Approval](#) form using online link
 - Public oral defense and submission of the [thesis defense report form](#)
 - Students must use the [proper format](#) (the [Graduate School](#) offers workshops on this)
 - Students must submit an electronic copy of the thesis to the department
- Graduation
 - Thesis submission deadlines are mid-November/mid-March for CLA and late November December/early April for the Graduate School. If a student intends to defend and deposit during the term in which s/he wants to graduate, the timeline for the defense date will be September-late October or January-late February. These may be busy times depending on the number of students defending in a semester so plan and schedule ahead. Remember your committee must receive a draft **3 weeks** prior to the defense
 - Students must [apply for graduation](#). The application deadline is typically mid-October for Fall graduation and mid-February for Spring graduation, so plan ahead.
 - Submit to Graduate School:
 - A PDF copy of your thesis must be uploaded via ProQuest. For detailed instructions on how to submit your thesis, please visit the [ProQuest ETD Submittal page](#).