



Capstone Project and the MAAS Graduation Process

The capstone or final piece of scholarly work is central in the graduate tradition. The required end product for all MAAS students (with the exception of those choosing the thesis option) is a portfolio. While you will complete your portfolio during your last semester of course work, you should keep the project in mind throughout your time in the MAAS program. Academic standards require that the reflective level of graduate work be much greater than that of undergraduate work; graduate degrees are earned, not given away. The portfolio is a summary assessment of your beginning and ending points—a binding, a unification of the MAAS journey.

While there are certain required components in this process, please remember that your own experience in the MAAS program is unique, as will be your portfolio.

1. Apply to the Graduate School for Graduation

- You will receive notification each semester of deadlines for making application for graduation from the MAAS Advisor and the Graduate School.
- Generally, the application, graduation fee, and Plan of Study are due one week after the first day of class in the semester in which you plan to graduate.
- Apply for graduation at the Graduate School Web site, grs.uncg.edu. This is the only portion of the graduation process that requires you to deal directly with the Graduate School. *Do not miss this deadline.*

2. Complete and Submit the Plan of Study to the MAAS Advisor

- Submit your **Plan of Study** to the MAAS Advisor at the same time you apply for graduation. The **Plan of Study** is simply the record of your classes and grades in the MAAS program.
- As you review your plan, make sure that you have met the MAAS requirement of 1) 610, 1) 620, 1) 630, then two more courses in one of those areas.
Example: 610, 610, 610, 620, 630 or 610, 620, 620, 620, 630 or 610, 620, 630, 630, 630
The remaining 6 classes will be courses from the MAAS program or other graduate courses at the 500 or 600 level.
- Access your student transcript through uncgenie—your **Plan of Study** should reflect the same information.
- You will find the **Plan of Study** form in the forms section at mals.uncg.edu. Please complete the **Plan of Study**, download it, sign it, and send it directly to:

MAAS Advisor
UNCG Online
Becher-Weaver Building
915 Northridge Street
Greensboro, NC 27403

- The *Plan of Study* is then reviewed, signed, and sent to the Graduate School for a final review and confirmation.

3. The Portfolio Project

The culminating experience for the MAAS degree is an individual portfolio which will include selections from written papers, oral presentations, research studies and course projects completed during the program, and a reflective essay. Creating the portfolio will give you an opportunity to review and reflect upon your individual intellectual process and progress acquired during the “journey” through the MAAS program. Because of the cross disciplinary course work that is the hallmark of this degree, every portfolio will be distinctively different for each student. **You are invited to come into the office to review portfolios of MAAS graduates.**

Required components:

1. **Title page** with the title or theme of your portfolio, your name, and date.
2. **Table of Contents:** You need not number all pages, as many of your papers will be copies of original submissions with professor comments. The table of contents will refer to the sections of the portfolio.
3. **Admission essay** (There is a copy on file in the MAAS office if you have misplaced yours.)
4. **Final Reflective essay:** This essay should be 6-7 pages long. It ties the portfolio together in thematic ways and shows your personal or professional goals and/or passions.
5. **Work from a minimum of six courses**—at least six products. You should include at least one product from each area – 610, 620 & 630.
6. **Portfolio Approval Sheet.**
7. Your portfolio may be encased within a **one inch, three-ring binder**. Each section of the portfolio should be separated by tabs and/or different colored title sheets. If you prefer, you may submit the portfolio in electronic form, CD or thumb drive.

Types of products that may be included:

- Descriptions of projects completed solo or in group presentations. These may be described or summarized, along with notes or any visual aids which accompanied the original presentations.
- Formal or informal writing (from journals to exams) from any course.
- Creative writing (poetry, fiction, memoir) written for any course.
- Electronic media created for any course: videotapes, audiotapes, Web pages or sites.
- Visual artifacts that represent involvement in a course goal: photos, scrapbooks, paintings, pottery, tapestries, sculpture.
- Results of any research project undertaken in the program: scientific lab reports, fieldwork projects, or library research, along with reflections on the meaning of such projects.

How to Begin:

1. The portfolio actually begins with your first MAAS course. At the end of each course, select and keep materials that best represent intellectual interests and/or personal/professional development. It is a good idea to keep hard copies of all papers, especially those submitted online.
2. At the beginning of the semester you plan to graduate, ask a faculty member with whom you have taken a MAAS class to work with you during the portfolio compilation process. This faculty member will serve as a reflective guide as you collect, select, and reflect on the meaning of the items chosen and will evaluate the overall quality of the final portfolio. He/she should receive drafts of your reflective essay in a timely manner in order to assist with the process. Arrange a timeline for completion with your professor. This faculty member will sign the approval form at completion.
3. Select products from a minimum of six courses to write about in a reflective essay that opens the portfolio and addresses the central themes and ideas central to your portfolio. This reflective essay is not a listing of the courses you took, the books you read, which professors you liked best—it is a true reflection and review of your graduate experience. The reflective essay opens the portfolio and should relay a sense of the depth of the impact MAAS program has had on you and your life—personally, intellectually, professionally, emotionally, and spiritually. How have you changed/what has changed/what difference has the coursework and your experiences made in your life? The essay should reference and include quotes and/or selections from the works included in the portfolio.
4. You will receive the official date for submission of portfolios to the MAAS office at the beginning of the semester—generally three to four weeks prior to the end of the semester.
5. Portfolios and transcripts are then reviewed by the MAAS faculty director and Certification of Degree Status forms are filed with the Director of Enrolled Services at the Graduate School.