

MAAS Handbook

for Graduate Students in the
Master of Arts in Asian Studies Program
at Florida International University

Steven Heine, Director
305-348-1788; SIPA 504; asian@fiu.edu

For more information: <https://asian.fiu.edu>

MAAS Program Information

The Master of Arts in Asian Studies at Florida International University prepares students for a variety of careers in public service, education, business, government, and other arenas in which expertise in the culture, history, language, politics, philosophy, religion, geography, and/or economics of Asian countries is desirable. The MAAS program encourages students to take an interdisciplinary approach, and it is receptive to students with a wide variety of backgrounds.

This document explains the requirements and procedures of the MAAS program, as well as some of the relevant university and graduate school requirements. Prospective and current students are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with the policies of the University Graduate School (UGS), which can be found on the UGS website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/>).

Admission

All applicants must have a BA or BS degree, or its equivalent, from a recognized institution of higher education before matriculating in the program. They must meet at least one of the following entrance requirements:

- 3.5 GPA in upper level undergraduate coursework;
- 3.0 GPA in upper level undergraduate course work and a 151-152 score (after August 2011) on the verbal portion of the GRE (or 475 prior to August 2011);
- MA in the humanities or social sciences from an accredited institution;
- 3.0 GPA in upper level undergraduate course work and with appropriate language or study abroad background as determined by written examination or evaluated by the program faculty committee;
- 3.0 GPA in upper level undergraduate course work and a 3.0 GPA or above in 9 hours of graduate courses as a special student in the program. (These nine hours may not be in Independent Study courses.)

The following materials are also required to complete the application:

- Complete FIU Graduate School on-line application.
- Official transcripts from all the universities attended (Note: official certified - translations are required for foreign transcripts, where the language is not English)
- One letter of recommendation from a college or university professor.
- Statement of purpose (750 words).

For applicants who are not native speakers of English, a minimum score of 550 on the TOEFL (213 computer-based; 80 internet-based) is required. Non-native English speakers seeking graduate assistantships must take the Test of Spoken English (TSE) and score 50 or better or score 26 or better on the speaking portion of the internet-based TOEFL. The Admissions Committee may make an exception to the minimum admission requirements when it is persuaded that a particular case warrants doing so. Students seeking a waiver of the minimum admission requirements should include a justification for this waiver with their application.

Applicants should note that the above requirements represent minimum qualifications; meeting any or all of them does not, in itself, assure admission to the program.

If admitted to the program, students may transfer up to 12 graduate credits earned in non-degree seeking status at FIU and up to 6 graduate credits earned at other recognized institutions of graduate education, provided a grade of B or better was awarded. MA students may matriculate in either Fall or Spring semester.

For detailed instructions on how to apply, visit the MAAS program website (<http://asian.fiu.edu/>).

Financial Assistance

The MAAS program provides financial assistance in the form of a very limited number of teaching assistantships. These assistantships include a tuition waiver for 9 credits per semester and a stipend sufficient to cover the living expenses of a single person. Please note that there are other fees which are not covered by the assistantship (e.g. parking fees, health fees, etc.). Stipends or partial stipends may be available during the summer. Also, Teaching Assistants must register for at least 3 credits of graduate courses during the summer. Check for updates on stipends and summer requirements. Continuing students may apply for vacated assistantships as they become available.

Students who wish to be considered for financial assistance should notify the Graduate Director when applying to the program.

Graduate students receiving an assistantship are assigned to work with a faculty member in one of the departments participating in the Asian Studies program for 20 hours per week as teaching assistants. Assistantships are renewable on a competitive basis, subject to satisfactory academic progress. Students receiving financial assistance may not carry incomplete grades for more than one semester. Assistants are expected to be full-time students, not otherwise employed.

Foreign students who receive assistantships will need a US work permit and social security number in order to receive their stipends. Students who are US citizens or resident aliens, but not legal residents of Florida, are strongly encouraged to meet requirements for Florida residency as soon as possible. Eligible students should begin this process before they begin their first semester of study in the program. The difference in tuition fees is significant, and few tuition waivers are available for non-resident students.

Advising

New students will plan their degree program with the assistance of the Graduate Director at the beginning of the semester of matriculation. The Graduate Director will advise students on degree requirements throughout their programs of study. By the end of their second semester in the program, however, MAAS students should select a faculty advisor from among participating Asian Studies faculty. Students are responsible for developing good working relations with

members of the Department faculty who share their interests. MAAS students are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in events sponsored by the Asian Studies Program.

Enrollment and Active Status

The MAAS program requires a minimum of 30 semester hours of credit at the graduate level. Students who fail to maintain a 3.25 grade point average will be dismissed from the program. Undergraduate courses which are taken to satisfy prerequisites for graduate courses do not count toward the 30-hour minimum requirement.

MA students are encouraged to take courses on a full-time basis (9 credits per semester). All students must enroll for at least 3 credits per semester until they have completed 30 credits. Thereafter, students must enroll for at least one credit per semester to maintain their degree-seeking status. While some courses are offered after regular working hours, students should not expect all the courses necessary to complete their program of study to be offered in the evening.

Lapses in enrollment for three or more consecutive semesters will result in automatic dismissal from the program, with no assurance of reinstatement, unless the student has been granted a leave of absence. Students may apply in writing for a leave of absence not to exceed two years. The Graduate Director and the Dean of Graduate Studies must approve leave requests.

An admitted degree-seeking student, who has not enrolled in any course at the University for two (2) or more consecutive terms, excluding summer terms and military withdrawals, will be required to apply for re-admission. The student must meet the University and program regulations in effect at the time of re-admission. Students must contact the Office of Admissions to apply for re-admission.

Full-time students should be able to complete degree requirements in two years. Part-time students should make every effort to complete their degree requirements in three years. All students must complete degree requirements within six years of matriculation in the program.

Transfer of Credits

During the student's second semester, the Graduate Director will decide on the student's requests to transfer credits earned from other programs at the University or at other accredited institutions, based on relevance to the planned program of study. The Graduate Director may approve the transfer of up to 12 graduate credits earned at FIU as a non-degree seeking student prior to admission into the program and up to 6 graduate credits earned at other recognized institutions. The Graduate Director may request that students provide supporting information (course syllabi, research papers) before deciding on the transfer of credits for any course, including independent study courses. After matriculating, students must secure the Director's approval before attending another institution to earn credits for transfer.

Program Requirements

All MAAS students must complete a core sequence of three courses (9 credits), usually taken during the first year of enrollment in the program. Only in exceptional circumstances will core courses be replaced by courses for which credit has been transferred. A list of core courses is available at <https://asian.fiu.edu/academic-programs/ma-in-asian-studies/ma-program-requirements/>.

In addition to satisfying the core requirements, students must complete at least 15 hours of main concentration coursework and satisfy the program exit requirements (as described below). A list of potential main concentration courses is available from the Asian Studies website. Students should consult with the Program Director (before enrolling) to determine whether other courses not on this list will satisfy program requirements. Students who would like to petition for an exception to Asian Studies program requirements must submit a petition in writing to the Graduate Committee for consideration.

Exit Options

To complete the requirements of their degree, MAAS students have the option of either (a) writing a Master's Thesis, or (b) a non-thesis Master's Essay. **At mid-course in the program (15 credits) the student must meet with the Program Director, who will determine whether the student is recommended for the Thesis option or the non-thesis Master's Essay option. No exceptions.**

If the Thesis option is recommended, the student must take responsibility to find an advisor who will form the advisory committee and make a recommendation to the Program Director.

If the non-thesis Master's Essay option is recommended, the student must take responsibility to find a professor to help guide this option.

Thesis Exit Option (30 credits)

Students who successfully defend their proposed topic for the Thesis exit option are responsible for all forms and dates pertaining to the Thesis process. M-forms and their respective due dates can be found on the UGS website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu>). Please note that all M-forms must be submitted to the University Graduate School and *not* the Asian Studies office.

Students writing a Thesis will normally take 6 credit hours of supervised research by enrolling in ASN 6972 Master's Thesis over two successive semesters. Students planning to enroll in ASN 6972 should prepare a thesis proposal for approval by a Thesis committee consisting of their Faculty Advisor and two other members of the university's Graduate Faculty. The Faculty Advisor and at least one other member of this committee must be faculty affiliated with the Asian Studies program. Students completing the Thesis should also consult the University Graduate School's Thesis/Dissertation Preparation manual (available online from the UGS website, <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation>). Students must carefully follow the procedural, stylistic, and other guidelines specified therein.

The MA Thesis must conform to accepted standards of scholarship in the relevant disciplines, as determined by thesis committee members. Students are therefore encouraged to consult often with the members of their committee.

No Thesis may be approved until all committee members indicate that the student may defend it in a public examination. This thesis defense must be scheduled prior to the appropriate University Graduate School deadline, and any member of the university community, including guests invited by the student, may attend. The outcome of the examination may be either to accept the Thesis, to specify revisions as a condition of acceptance, or to reject the Thesis. In the last case, committee members will specify conditions under which they will participate in another defense. All such decisions are made by a consensus of Thesis committee members. Please keep in mind that the Thesis must be approved by the Academic Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.

Non-Thesis Master's Essay Exit Option (30 credits)

Students pursuing the non-thesis Master's Essay option must complete a 40-page essay, in consultation with his/her faculty advisor and the Program Director. To fulfill the requirements of this option, students will complete 3 hours of coursework related to their proposed topic as well as 3 credits of ASN 6912 Master's Essay.

The Master's Essay is carried out under the direction and supervision of a Primary Professor along with a Secondary Professor. The Primary Professor should have expertise in the field of the student's research. The professors supervise the Essay and provide constructive criticism in content, style, and form. The Primary Professor must be chosen and approved by the Asian Studies Program Director at least four weeks before the semester in which the essay is being completed. **THE PRIMARY PROFESSOR WILL CONSULT AND DISCUSS WITH THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE BEFORE APPROVAL IS GIVEN.** Please note that if Asian Studies Director, Dr. Steven Heine, serves as Primary Professor, he will work with students to select a Secondary Professor. If a different Primary Professor is chosen, then Dr. Heine will generally serve as the Secondary Professor.

Students following the Master's Essay option will first submit a 2-page formal proposal. The proposal should explain the problem to be investigated and convince the Primary professor that the problem merits investigation. It should show that the student has read the relevant and recent literature on the subject and contain a list of materials consulted during the preliminary stages of research. The proposal is part of the learning process and helps the student avoid oversights and possible mistakes as well as assists the Primary professor to provide appropriate assistance to the student in his/her task.

Approximately one month later, Master's Essay students will submit a 5-page, double-space overview of their topic with a bibliography. This overview must be presented and defended with the primary and secondary professors. The 5-pages serve as a benchmark for the professors to assess the topic for clarity, depth, and continuity. It also serves as an advisement time for continuing research and constructive criticism.

Advisement Policies

For additional information and guidance relating to the Asian Studies MA Program, please reach out to asian@fiu.edu for advising.