Petition for Candidacy

All degree candidates must submit a Petition for Candidacy (https://inside.mills.edu/student_services/registrar_and_records/petition_for_candidacy_writeable.pdf) to the M Center. The petition must be approved and filed before the candidate’s final semester at Mills (see Academic Calendar for deadlines). The Petition for Candidacy form (https://inside.mills.edu/student_services/registrar_and_records/petition_for_candidacy_writeable.pdf) is available online and in the M Center. A Petition for Candidacy is required to participate in Commencement.

Comprehensive Examination

Comprehensive examinations must be completed and grades submitted before a student will be allowed to graduate.

Thesis or Dissertation

Dissertations and theses are now electronically submitted. Once the dissertation or thesis has been approved and signed by the dissertation chair or the thesis director and the committee members, please make an appointment with a reference librarian or attend an upload group session to electronically upload them. Reference librarians can be reached at 510.430.2385 or library@mills.edu. Please bring your fully signed (except by the Provost) coversheets. The Provost will sign dissertations and theses at the library.

For all other theses, two copies of the approved thesis must be filed with the library approximately one week prior to the end of instruction for the term in which the student intends to graduate. Refer to the Academic Calendar for deadlines. These approved copies must be signed by the thesis director or dissertation chair and the committee members. The provost will sign theses at the library.

A nonrefundable $45 Thesis Binding Fee will be charged to the students’ account.

If the type B thesis (a creative work in the fine arts, interdisciplinary computer science, or creative writing) is of such a nature that it cannot be duplicated, the original work will become the property of the College and will be deposited in the library. If the creator of a type B thesis intends to copyright the thesis, the College retains a nonexclusive copyright interest.

No student will be permitted to graduate until the thesis or dissertation is turned in and a passing grade for the thesis submitted. Doctoral dissertations must be successfully defended in order for doctoral candidates to be eligible to participate in the Commencement ceremony.

Dates for Conferral of Degree

Mills College confers degrees four times per year. Students who complete all degree requirements in the fall will have an official graduation date of January 2 of the following year. Students who complete all requirements at the end of the spring semester will have an official graduation date that corresponds to the date of Commencement. Students who complete all requirements in the summer will have a graduation date of September 1. Students who complete all degree requirements in the January term will have a graduation date of February 1.

Master’s degree and doctoral candidates who have completed all of their course work except the thesis or dissertation must apply for in-progress status and pay any associated in-progress fees (see in-progress status (https://catalog.mills.edu/graduate/academic-regulations/degree-requirements/#in-progress-status)).

Commencement

The commencement ceremony, which takes place each May, includes the formal conferral of the degree for students who have completed all requirements in the previous summer term, previous fall semester, or spring semester. For MA, MFA, MBA, and MPP candidates, this includes completion of all formal course work including the thesis, graduate research project, or comprehensive examination. For doctoral candidates, this includes completion of all formal course work, the defense of their dissertation, and the Diploma Release form from the School of Education. For certificate candidates, this includes completion of all course work. The conferral of the degree is signified by the awarding of the doctoral or master’s hood, if applicable, and the symbolic presentation of the diploma or certificate. Actual diplomas are mailed to graduates who have cleared their student accounts and all holds.

All students must submit a Petition for Candidacy to participate in commencement.

Formal academic regalia are required of all students participating in the graduation ceremonies.

Graduate students are eligible to walk in commencement only when they have completed all degree requirements, with the following exceptions:

• Students with incomplete (I) grades in the final semester are eligible to walk without petition.

• Students who are within 8 credits of completion who are registered to complete their course work at Mills during the subsequent summer term are eligible to walk without petition.

• Students with a thesis or dissertation in progress during their final semester are eligible to walk if their department confirms that the thesis or dissertation is substantially complete.

Only under extenuating circumstances can students who are within two courses (8 credits) of completion and do not meet the above criteria, petition the Academic Standing Committee to request an exception. Requests for exceptions must be submitted by the withdrawal deadline during the spring semester in which the student would like to walk.

Diplomas

Diplomas for students who have completed their requirements in the summer are mailed in late October. Diplomas for students who have completed their requirements in the January or fall term are mailed in late February. Diplomas for spring graduates are mailed in late June. The diploma bears the student’s full name as it appears in myMILLS, the degree, the area of study, and the date of the student’s actual graduation. The MBA, MM, MPP, and MBAMPP bears only the degree and date of graduation.
Diplomas will not be released under certain conditions:

- If a student is in financial default, the College may withhold her/his diploma until all financial obligations are met.
- If a student has any incomplete or in-progress grades or has any missing grades, the diploma will be held until the incomplete courses are completed and graded or the missing grades have been submitted.
- If a student attended another institution through cross-registration during the final semester, the diploma will be held until an official transcript from the institution is received and reviewed and credit is granted.
- Diplomas for doctoral students will be released only upon receipt of a Diploma Release form in the M Center from the School of Education.

Changes to Academic Records After the Degree Has Been Conferred

A student’s academic record is sealed when the degree has been conferred. With the exception of errors, omissions, or documented discrepancies, changes to a student’s major, minor, concentration, or academic honors, or the removal and/or change of incompletes, grades, pending grad appeals for last term in attendance, or other components of the academic record are not permitted.