The earning of a graduate degree is a wide-ranging, challenging intellectual experience. It certainly involves mastery of important subject matter. It may require the possession of knowledge in addition to that acquired through course work and also the ability to creatively synthesize and interpret that knowledge. Further, research or artistic projects are often an integral part of graduate study as may be field responsibilities or service obligations. Since graduate work thus extends beyond completion of course work in several ways, it is often the case that some form of culminating event, be it comprehensive examination, thesis, or other undertaking is part of the degree program.