



SCHOOL OF  
GRADUATE STUDIES  
**GUIDE TO  
GRADUATION**



Academic Year  
2024 - 2025

## SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES GUIDE TO GRADUATION

This handbook is published by the School of Graduate Studies of the University of North Dakota under the authority of the Dean. It is considered a supplement to the UND Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog. The handbook is intended to guide University of North Dakota graduate students through the procedures and processes of the School of Graduate Studies. The School of Graduate Studies is dedicated to serving students as they progress through their programs. One of its missions is to ensure that standards are being met. This handbook is a step-by-step guide for students who strive to meet those standards. Any exception to these policies must be approved by the School of Graduate Studies Dean.

**For additional information and forms  
Please visit our website:  
[gradschool.UND.edu](http://gradschool.UND.edu)**

UND is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution (for additional information on Equal Opportunity policies and procedures, see UND catalogs and other major printed pieces). The ADA Accessibility Line is available to report disability access problems on campus, 701-777-2796 (TDD) or 701-777-2591 (Voice).

## University of North Dakota Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide transformative learning, discovery and community engagement opportunities for developing tomorrow's leaders.

### Core Values

**Community** | A spirit of collaboration and connectedness across the University and beyond

**Discovery** | An enthusiasm for inquiry, creativity, and innovation

**Diversity** | An understanding and appreciation of diverse people, experiences, and ideas

**Inclusivity** | A welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for all

**Liberal Arts** | An educational foundation essential for living an intellectually curious, personally fulfilling, and socially responsible life

**Lifelong Learning** | A passion for learning, civic engagement, and community leadership

## School of Graduate Studies Mission Statement

The School of Graduate Studies has responsibility for all graduate work at the University except for that leading to the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) and Juris Doctorate (J.D.). It is the purpose of the School of Graduate Studies to provide opportunity for advanced study beyond the limits of undergraduate courses, to make available the resources of the University in such combinations as will meet the occupational, intellectual, and cultural needs of qualified post-baccalaureate students, and to encourage original investigation and creative scholarship. The University of North Dakota offers the largest and most diversified graduate school in the region. A number of unique facilities and support resources augment the instructional and research program.

## Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to become informed and to observe all regulations and procedures required by the University, the School of Graduate Studies Catalog and the program in which she or he is enrolled. The student is responsible for reading the Graduate Catalog, all contracts for employment, the terms and conditions of any awards and correspondence from the various offices of the University. The student is responsible for knowing his or her academic standing and grade-point average. While the School of Graduate Studies attempts to notify students regarding any problems in the student's progress toward a degree, the student alone is responsible for maintaining satisfactory academic standing and progress.

The School of Graduate Studies expects all students and faculty to be aware of its policies and procedures. All policies can be found in the UND Academic Catalog at: <http://und-public.courseleaf.com/graduateacademicinformation/>. Ignorance of a rule does not constitute a basis for waiving that rule.

## School of Graduate Studies Standards and Professional Conduct Policy

This policy establishes specific standards of professional conduct for students enrolled in the University of North Dakota School of Graduate Studies. The School of Graduate Studies considers these professional standards to be part of its academic curriculum. The standards contained within this policy are in addition to a set of university-wide policies found in the Code of Student Life that are applicable to all students at the University of North Dakota. Alleged violations of the standards of professional conduct established by this policy are addressed using procedures established by the School of Graduate Studies outlined in the full policy found in the Academic Catalog.

## Code of Student Life

The University of North Dakota Code of Student Life (Code) outlines the rights and responsibilities enjoyed by the students who make up the University community. The purpose of the information contained in the Code of Student Life is to promote and maintain a learning environment appropriate for an institution of higher education and to serve as a basic guide to help prevent abuse of the rights of others. Members of the University community are expected to be familiar with the policies and processes contained within the Code and to act in compliance with them at all times. The Code is intended to be a general handbook to give guidance and direction to members of a very diverse University community. Although it is not possible to cover every conceivable situation that might arise, specific questions relating to the Code may be directed to the office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Nothing within the Code is intended to limit or restrict freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. General statements of philosophy and principles to which the University subscribes are found in the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) statement of academic freedom ([SBHE 401.1](#)). You can access the Code at: <http://und.edu/code-of-student-life/>.

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# Doctoral Degree Checklist

Please check our website for updated information and deadlines: [graduateschool.und.edu](http://graduateschool.und.edu)

- Complete any requirements as stated in your admission letter.** *(This only applies to students admitted in provisional status)*
- Select the Chair and Members of Your Faculty Advisory Committee** *(Recommended: Second Semester)*
- Submit Your Program of Study** *(Recommended: Second Semester)*
- Complete Comprehensive Exams** *(To be taken once a substantial amount of coursework and scholarly tools have been completed)*
- Submit a Topic Proposal of Your Research** *(As early as possible, but no later than the semester before you plan to graduate.)*
- Advance to Candidacy** *(At least one semester prior to graduation. When all the above requirements are met, you will be advanced to candidacy)*
- Apply to Graduate** *(You must apply by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)*

## Graduation Requirements for Dissertation Completion:

- Submit Preliminary Approval and Notice of Defense form to the School of Graduate Studies** *(Form must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies **at least two weeks prior to your scheduled defense**. Check the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate.)*
- Format Review** - The student and his/her committee are jointly responsible for seeing to it that the dissertation follows a correct form of scholarly style and usage. Formatters/editors are available for hire – if you would like a list of names, please contact the School of Graduate Studies.
- Hold your oral defense.** Submit your approval/signature page using the DocuSign form right before or right after your defense. *(Last day to defend is the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)*
- Submit Electronic PDF of Dissertation to UMI/ProQuest for Publishing.** *(Submit by the published term deadline)*
- “Final Report” on Candidate form will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies.** *(This form will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies by your Advisor, and by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)*
- Complete Survey of Earned Doctorates (Ph.D. students only, this does not apply to Ed.D. or D.A. students).** The online application can be found at <https://sed-ncses.org/GradDateRouter.aspx>  
The School of Graduate Studies, as well as yourself, will receive email confirmation after you have completed the survey.

## Master's Degree Checklist

Please check our website for updated information and deadlines: [graduateschool.und.edu](http://graduateschool.und.edu)

- Complete any requirements as stated in your admission letter.** *(This only applies to students admitted in provisional status)*
- Select the Chair and Members of Your Faculty Advisory Committee** *(thesis only - Recommended: First or Second Semester)*
- Submit Your Program of Study** *(Recommended: First or Second Semester)*
- Submit a Topic Proposal of Your Research** *(As early as possible, but no later than the semester before you plan to graduate)*
- Advance to Candidacy** *(At least one semester prior to graduation. When all the above requirements are met, you will be advanced to candidacy)*
- Apply to Graduate** *(You must apply by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)*

### Graduation Requirements for Independent Study, Scholarly Project or Design Project:

- Submit the final copy of your independent study, scholarly project or design project to your advisor.** Check with your advisor for this requirement. He/she will need sufficient time to read before the Final Report Deadline.
- Complete Comprehensive Exams** (If applicable, check with your department for this requirement)
- "Final Report" on Candidate form will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies.** *(This form will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies by your Advisor, and by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)*

### Graduation Requirements for Thesis Completion:

- Submit Preliminary Approval and Notice of Defense form to the School of Graduate Studies** *(Form must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies **at least two weeks prior to your scheduled defense.** Check the Published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate.)*
- Format Review** - The student and his/her committee are jointly responsible for seeing to it that the thesis follows a correct form of scholarly style and usage. Formatters/editors are available for hire – if you would like a list of names, please contact the School of Graduate Studies.
- Hold your oral defense. Submit your approval/signature page using the DocuSign form right before or right after your defense.** *(Last day to defend is the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)*
- Submit Electronic PDF of Thesis to UMI/ProQuest for Publishing.** *(Submit by the published term deadline)*
- "Final Report" on Candidate form will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies.** *(This form will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies by your Advisor, and by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)*

## Dates and Deadlines

If you plan to graduate during one of these terms, these are the deadlines you will need to follow.

	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025
Advance to Candidacy	September 6	January 24	May 30
Apply for Graduation	October 4	February 21	June 27
Submit to the School of Graduate Studies: 1. Preliminary Approval/Notice of Defense  Note: if your defense is scheduled before this deadline, these forms must be submitted 2 weeks prior to the date of the Defense.	November 21	April 17	July 10
Last day to defend Thesis/Dissertation  Note: Forms to bring to your defense for committee signatures: 1. Approval Page 2. Final Report on Candidate	December 6	May 2	July 24
Submit to the School of Graduate Studies: 1. Final Report on Candidate 2. Thesis/Dissertation Approval page	December 12	May 8	July 31
Submit electronic PDF of Thesis/Dissertation to UMI/ProQuest Publishing  Note: once you electronically submit your final copy for publishing, no changes are made to the format or content. Therefore, the burden of how the manuscript looks is entirely the responsibility of the student author	December 12	May 8	July 31
Graduate Commencement	December 20, 2024	May 17, 2025	August 8, 2025

## How to Use School of Graduate Studies Forms

The School of Graduate Studies forms are all signed and submitted electronically using DocuSign. **All forms need to be received in the School of Graduate Studies by the posted deadline.** This means that forms need to be **initiated prior to the deadline** to ensure enough time for all signers to review and approve the form.

### *Initiating a DocuSign form*

- Forms can be initiated by the student, a faculty member, or a department administrative support professional.
- Click on the form link on the website. This will open a Signer Information page. Required signers are marked with a red asterisk (\*). If you are unsure of the correct person to list, contact your advisor or department.
- Confirm the email addresses are correct. An incorrect email address will prevent the form from being routed appropriately and will cause delays in the form completion.
- Click “BEGIN SIGNING” after the names and emails have all been entered. This will bring you to the form.
- Complete the form in full and click “FINISH” to begin routing.
- Since the form can be initiated by anyone, the student signature is completed as a separate step.
- Look for an email from Laura Look via the DocuSign system. The subject line should begin with SGS DocuSign: [form name]
- Click the link in the email to sign the Document. The system will automatically route the form to each signer and then submit the form to the School of Graduate Studies for final approval.
- Once the form has received all signatures, all signers will receive a confirmation email with a PDF of the completed form.

### *Tips*

- The DocuSign links are all posted on the School of Graduate Studies [Forms page](#).
- Always login to DocuSign using your UND login to be able to track the progress of your forms.
  1. Enter your UND email address (@UND.edu – NOT @NDUS.edu)
  2. Click on the blue “Use Company Login: button on the next page to be directed to the NDUS SSO login page.
  3. Login using your NDUS dotted ID and password (same as Blackboard and Campus Connection).
- Forms cannot be corrected/changed once they have been signed and you will be required to submit a new form. Please make sure you enter all information on the form carefully so you don't have to do it twice.
- Contact the School of Graduate Studies if you have any questions or need corrections made to your signer list.

## Annual Graduate Student Assessment

Timeline: Once per academic year (August 15-May 15)

Graduate Students have a right to periodic evaluations to assess their academic progress, performance, and professional potential. The assessment will be completed by the advisor or committee chair and may consult committee members, course instructors, graduate assistantship advisors, or others that have worked with the student during the assessment period.

A self-evaluation by the student, written assessment and meeting are required at least once per academic year (August 15 - May 15). Departments may use the School of Graduate Studies Annual Graduate Student Assessment template, or they may use their own. No matter which template is used, the assessment must include a student self-evaluation, a written evaluation by the advisor or chair, and an in-person meeting. Assessments must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies once per year for each student to be stored in the student record.

You should consult your advisor or department to find out more about their selected process. Forms and instructions on how to use them can be found on the School of Graduate Studies website.

# Select the Chair and Members of your Faculty Advisory Committee

Recommended Time Frame: First/Second Semester  
Form: Program of Study

## *Selecting an Advisor or Chair*

Students are appointed an advisor when admitted to the program. You will notify the graduate school of your committee when you complete your Program of Study form. Any changes to your advisor or committee will be made using the Change form. Your advisor/chair must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. The list of Graduate Faculty is available on our website (faculty-staff/additional resources).

Be prepared to share your research interests with your advisor. Although your research interests may evolve, you should have a clear sense of what you want to study.

## *Faculty Committee Requirements*

Once you have selected the chair of your committee (advisor), the two of you must decide who will make up your Faculty Advisory Committee. Before you submit your program of study, you will need to formalize your committee.

### **Master's Thesis**

You and your advisor need to select at least two other graduate faculty members to serve on your committee. Three committee members including your chair are standard. If your program of study includes a minor, one of your three-committee members must be from that respective department.

### **Master's Non-thesis**

If you have chosen the non-thesis option, you may need only an advisor, depending on what your program requires for the non-thesis final degree project. Consult with your advisor.

### **Doctor of Philosophy Doctor of Education**

As a Ph.D. or Ed.D. student, you need to select, in consultation with your advisor, all members of your faculty advisory committee. Individual departments may have specific committee guidelines, however, the SGS requires at least four members on your committee, including the member-at-large (someone outside of the student's department) as one who, while ensuring that School of Graduate Studies' policies and procedures are being followed, can also offer valuable feedback from an inter- or cross-disciplinary perspective.

### **Doctor of Arts**

As a D.A. student, you have the option of putting together a three or five-member committee. On five-member

committees, the fifth member will serve as the member-at-large.

**Doctor of Nursing Practice**  
**Doctor of Physical Therapy**  
**Doctor of Occupational Therapy**

As a D.N.P., D.P.T, or O.T.D. student, you will not have a committee, only an advisor.

The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies recommends that you convene your Advisory Committee at least once every semester. Discuss your progress, any potential research problems, and any changes to your desired career path, with your Advisory Committee early and often. Remember, your Advisory Committee is there to help you!

### *Things to consider when selecting a faculty committee*

You should choose your advisor/chair and faculty committee wisely, in consultation with your program's Graduate Director. You will be working closely with your advisor/chair for as long as it takes you to finish your degree. Here are some questions to consider when selecting your advisor/chair and committee members.

**What are the professor's academic interests? Do they match my own?**

It is common sense to choose faculty who have similar academic interests as you. For example, if you study the Vietnam War, why would you choose someone who specializes in medieval history?

If you are not sure whether faculty have expertise in your specific topic of interest — ask. You may also want to ask for a list of their recent and past publications. Reading faculty's own work is the best way to determine their academic interests. If your interests do not match, they will likely suggest someone else with whom you should work.

**How many other graduate students does the professor advise? Will they have time for you? What has the experience of other students who have selected professors as their advisor/committee been?**

It is important that you find out how much time the professor has for each of their students. A professor who is spread too thin may be a source of frustration for you. Discuss with your potential advisor the expectations you each have for how often you will meet and how long your professor generally takes to get you feedback on submitted work. If your expectations are too far apart, this person may not be the best advisor for you.

If possible, talk with other students who have worked with the professor you are considering. Keep in mind, however, that some personalities simply do not mix well together. You will not necessarily have the same experience with a certain professor as that of another graduate student. Do not base your decision about a faculty member on one person's opinion. Again, common sense is key here. Do this professor's students tend to complete their degrees on time? Do students speak positively of their experiences working with this professor, whether in the lab, as a teaching assistant, or on publications? Look at past theses and dissertations supervised by this professor: where are the professor's graduates now? Are their career

paths similar to your interests? A good advisor will be able to share some success stories.

**Do I get along with this professor?**

It is of absolute importance to have a cordial and professional relationship with your faculty advisor/chair. You will be spending far too much time with one another over the course of several years to have a contentious relationship. At the same time, do not select faculty solely because he/she is a nice person.

You need to select a person who can guide you along and who is the best fit for you not only personally, but also academically and professionally.

**Will the professor speak honestly with me about my progress and ideas?**

A good advisor/chair will have clearly articulated and realistic standards. You need to select someone who will support you and your efforts, but who is also willing to offer his/her honest opinion and criticism, whether or not you want to hear it.

**Will the professor offer ideas and suggestions related to my research?**

When you visit with them, are they enthusiastic about your research interests? Do they challenge and stimulate your thinking? Are they helpful and encouraging? Do they provide appropriate amounts of freedom and direction, respectively? Are they committed to your professional development? The steps to degree—whether exams, projects, theses, or dissertations—take time to complete. Make sure you have a topic that is stimulating to you and an advisor/committee who is interested in it.

Although you will probably not know the answers to all of these questions, they are important issues to consider. Talk to your Graduate Program Director. Talk to other graduate students and, if necessary, talk to other professors who you trust. Perhaps the best way is to visit with the members of your department. Ask to set up a brief meeting with various professors, visit with them in the hall, pull them aside after class, etc. Make an informed decision. As important as this decision is, remember that it is possible to change advisors if conflicts arise, your research changes direction and interests no longer align, your advisor leaves the university, etc. Above all, be professional in your discussions, decisions, and communications.

## Submit Your Program of Study

Recommended Time Frame: Second Semester  
Form: Program of Study

Your Program of Study is a listing of the courses and credits you need to take to meet the requirements for your degree and major (your area of concentration). In addition to a major, some students elect to obtain a minor (a concentrated study in a specific supporting field) or to take courses in a cognate area (a selection of courses providing broad support to the major). The courses for your major, minor, and/or cognate are to all be included in your Program.

It is your responsibility to know what the course and credit requirements are for your department. Review the “Departmental Programs” section of the Graduate Student Catalog for detailed information regarding your requisite courses. It is best practice to consult with your advisor and/or the program graduate director when preparing your Program of Study.

### **Number of credits required for UND graduate degrees**

Keep in mind that credits vary with each department. Check the degree requirements for your program in the Academic Catalog.

The School of Graduate Studies requires that a master’s degree is a minimum of 30 credits beyond the Bachelor’s degree and a doctoral degree is 90 credits beyond the Bachelor’s degree. Professional programs may have different requirements.

The number of credits required may vary with each department. Make sure you check the degree requirements for your program in the Academic Catalog and consult with your advisor.

### **General Guidelines**

At least one-half of the credits for your degree must be in courses numbered 500 or higher. Keep your graduation date in mind, as most upper level courses are not offered every semester. Only those UND courses listed in the Graduate Catalog are eligible for use on your program of study (except for courses used in a cognate area).

For students in a doctoral research degree, a substantial portion of the credits for the program are often devoted to independent research, the results of which are to be incorporated in the dissertation.

### **Minor**

A minor is a concentrated study in a specific supporting field at the graduate level. A minor must be titled (a UND graduate program) and listed on the student’s program of study and be approved by a Graduate Faculty member of the minor department/program. The minor will be listed on the student’s transcript. Only the courses approved for graduate credit may be included in a minor.

**Cognate**

If you choose to have a cognate, all UND courses numbered 300 and higher listed in the Undergraduate and Graduate catalog are eligible. The number of credits required for a cognate varies from department to department. Check with your advisor or Graduate Director for the mandatory number of credits you need to complete.

If you choose to use 300 or 400 level courses for graduate credit, it is understood that you will be required to do additional work over and above that typically required for undergraduates. This additional work is typically of an independent nature. For more information, talk with the professor of the course. Be sure these courses are labeled as a “cognate” on your program of study. If these courses are not approved for graduate credit, they will not count toward the total credits required for the degree.

**Transfer Credits**

Graduate work is considered for transfer only on an individual basis and only after the student has completed satisfactory work in residence at UND. The transfer credits are approved by the student’s advisory committee and the School of Graduate Studies and are included in the program of study for the UND graduate degree. Only accepted transfer credits will be recorded on the UND transcript. If you plan to include transfer credits in your program, make sure they can be applied to your degree. This is something you may want to verify with your Advisor and/or the School of Graduate Studies. The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies has the final say on transfer credits.

Transfer courses must be listed on your program of study exactly as they appear on your transcript with the exception that quarter credits be converted into semester credits. If you have not yet completed the courses from which you will be transferring credits, list the institution they will be taken from next to the course.

For detailed information, refer to the “Transfer of Graduate Credits” section in the Graduate Catalog. An official transcript should be sent to the School of Graduate Studies.

**Non-degree credits**

You can apply up to nine graduate non-degree credits to your degree if they are approved on your program of study.

**Over-age and Obsolete courses**

Graduate courses more than seven years old are considered obsolete and may not be included on your program of study. However, you may revalidate a UND course by submitting a plan of study for approval to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. If you plan to revalidate any UND courses, a revalidation plan must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies Dean before the revalidation process is undertaken. Your revalidation plan must involve the professor with whom you took the course or a faculty member with similar expertise if the original professor is no longer at UND.

**Scholarly Tools (Doctoral only)** Each department has specific scholarly tools (languages, math, statistics, computer programming, etc.) required for study and research in the discipline. Consult with your advisor and/or the graduate program director to ensure you understand these requirements.

**Organization of your Program of Study** Be sure you have included all of the courses and credits required for your degree. If you are adding a minor or cognate, indicate these courses by checking the appropriate columns. If you are substituting required coursework, indicate this by listing the required course in the substitutions columns.

**Signatures**

Non-thesis/Independent Study:  
Advisor and Graduate Director  
*If you declare a minor, you also need the Graduate Director of that department to sign the Program of Study.*

Thesis/Dissertation:  
Advisory Committee and Graduate Director  
*If you declare a minor, one committee member must be from the minor department.*

**Changes to a Program of Study** If changes are necessary, after consulting with your advisor, fill out the “**Change Form**”. If you have more than a few changes, please submit a new Program of Study form.

**Changing from thesis to non-thesis (master’s only)** Think about your education and career goals before determining whether you will choose the thesis or non-thesis option (if this choice is available in your program). If you change from a thesis to a non-thesis option, you need to submit a new program of study, as well as a new topic proposal and advisor appointment. This change requires the approval of the Dean and must be clearly justified.

Do not register for your thesis or independent study credits until you are sure which option you are choosing. Any changes to a transcript require an administrative procedures petition. A permanent SP or UP for thesis credits already taken will be recorded on your transcript.

## Complete Comprehensive Exams for Doctoral Students

Recommended Time Frame: Consult with your advisor and the graduate program director to ensure you know what requirements must be completed, in terms of coursework and scholarly tools, before you become eligible to take your comprehensive exams.

Form: Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

Students seeking a Doctor of Arts, Doctor of Education, or Doctor of Philosophy degree must take the program's comprehensive examination before they can advance to candidacy. The comprehensive exam may be written, oral, or a mixture of both, depending on the program. Consult with your advisor to ensure that you know and are prepared for the format and content of the examination. You may take your exams once you have completed the program's requirements, including coursework and scholarly tools (as applicable), necessary for eligibility. Check with your department or advisor for more information on exam eligibility, format, content, and timing.

### **Content**

The content of the examination will be determined by the Graduate Faculty of your respective department. It will be extensive and will cover the field or fields in which your degree is taken. If you do not pass your comprehensive exams, you may repeat them no earlier than the next regularly scheduled offering and only with the prior approval of your advisory committee, your department, and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

### **Approval to take comprehensive exams**

To take your exams, you will need to have completed a substantial amount of your coursework, you will need to be in Approved Status, your Program of Study must be approved, and you need to have completed your scholarly tool requirements. Students should consult with their department on their individual procedures for scheduling the comprehensive examination.

### **Results of the comprehensive exam**

All results from a student's comprehensive exams are submitted to the School of Graduate Studies on the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Form. You are allowed to retake a failing comprehensive exam one time only.

## Submit a Proposal of Your Research Topic

Recommended Time Frame: Consult with your advisor and advisory committee on the expectations for the timing and content of your research topic proposal, but generally before you start your research, and at least six months prior to your expected graduation date.

Form: Topic Proposal

The Graduate Dean recommends that you convene your Advisory Committee at least once every six months. Discuss your progress and any potential research problems with your Advisory Committee early and often. Their input can be invaluable and save you time and effort. Your Advisory Committee is there to help. You should submit your research proposal at the beginning of your research, not the end.

Your research proposal for an independent study, research project, thesis, or dissertation must be approved by your Faculty Advisory Committee and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies before you can become a candidate for your degree. You cannot graduate in the same semester or summer session in which you become a candidate and therefore you must receive approval on your proposal prior to your final semester. You should submit your research proposal at the beginning of your research, not the end. This requirement is in your best interest, for it is important that you do not waste time and energy by undertaking substantial work on a topic that has not yet been approved. Work with your advisor to determine what requirements your department needs to submit the topic proposal.

Some graduate programs will require a dissertation research proposal/prospectus defense prior to writing the dissertation. Some departments require students to write specific chapters of the dissertation and to conduct a literature review prior to submitting a topic proposal.

The earlier you submit your proposal the better. You should expect to go through many drafts of your project. This is often frustrating for students, for it can and often does delay their planned graduation date. The sooner you know what you are researching, the sooner you can begin your project, and the sooner you can begin making revisions. When possible, plan ahead.

### **Regulatory Compliance**

Students need approval from the appropriate institutional oversight committee if the topic involves any of the below listed research. Your Topic Proposal will not be approved by the School of Graduate Studies until this approval is received.

Office of Research Compliance & Ethics (777-4279) or  
<https://und.edu/research/resources/>.

For information on:

IRB (*Institutional Review Board*) if the research involves human subjects.

IBC (*Institutional Biosafety Committee*) if the research involves the use of recombinant DNA or biohazardous materials. Research involving animals, recombinant DNA, radiation, and bio-hazardous agents also requires special approval. Please consult with your advisor regarding approval of such research.

If you plan to conduct research on human subjects, you must first receive approval from the Institutional Review Board. You are not allowed to conduct research until you receive this approval. Forms and information are available at the Office of Research Compliance & Ethics.

**Plan your Topic Proposal**

Your topic proposal is intended not only to give you direction, but also to aid your advisor and advisory committee in determining whether or not the problem or study is appropriate for the degree you are seeking. It is wise to consult with your advisor as you write your topic proposal. He/She should be able to advise you on the practicality and pertinence of your project. Your advisor should also be able to offer suggestions on how to conduct research on your topic and to help you think about what kind of results you might find.

**Write your Topic Proposal in Narrative Style**

Once you have a solid idea of what your research project will be, you need to describe it in a narrative style on the appropriate form. Your proposal should be lucid and concise - no more than one page in length. You will be asked to provide the following items in narrative form:

- 1) A title (it can be changed at a later date)
- 2) A brief description of the nature of the problem or study
- 3) The procedure or methodology to be followed
- 4) The anticipated results

**Signatures Required**

After you have written the proposal, you need to secure the signatures of your Faculty Advisory Committee. Some departments have processes by which they handle the topic proposal. Talk to your advisor. Non-thesis master's students need only their advisor's signature.

## Advance to Candidacy

Recommended Time Frame: Consult with your advisor and advisory committee on the typical program expectations for the timing of, and requirements for, advancement to candidacy. You must advance to candidacy at least one semester prior to graduation.

There are a number of steps that you must fulfill before you can advance to candidacy. The Program Director, your Advisor, or the School of Graduate Studies can provide specific information about what these are. An email will be sent to both you and your advisor when you have been advanced to candidacy.

### *Requirements to be advanced to candidacy by degree:*

#### **Master's thesis and non-thesis**

1. Be in approved status
2. Have a faculty advisor and/or committee appointed and approved by the Dean
3. Have an approved Program of Study in the School of Graduate Studies
4. Have an approved Topic/Research Proposal in the School of Graduate Studies (only required for students completing a thesis, scholarly project, independent study, or design project)

#### **Doctor of Arts**

#### **Doctor of Education**

#### **Doctor of Philosophy**

1. Be in approved status
2. Have a faculty advisory committee appointed, and approved by the Dean
3. Have an approved Program of Study in the School of Graduate Studies
4. Complete your Scholarly Tools (prior to taking exams)
5. Complete and pass your department's comprehensive exams
6. Have an approved Research Proposal in the School of Graduate Studies

#### **Doctor of Nursing Practice**

#### **Doctor of Occupational Therapy**

#### **Doctor of Physical Therapy**

1. Be in approved status
2. Have a faculty advisor appointed, and approved by the Dean
3. Have an approved Program of Study in the School of Graduate Studies
4. Have an approved Research Proposal in the School of Graduate Studies

## Apply to Graduate

Recommended Time Frame: You must submit this by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate

This is a simple, but essential step in the School of Graduate Studies process. It is of utmost importance that you pay close attention to deadlines. A missed deadline will put you at risk for delaying your graduation date. Starting with your “Application for a Graduate Degree,” you will need to make yourself aware of what paperwork is due and when. This is your responsibility!

You must be registered in at least one credit in the term which you plan to graduate. If you have taken all of your coursework, you may enroll in 996 continuing enrollment credits. You will need to get the call number from your department.

### **Apply to Graduate: Online Application**

You will apply for graduation through Campus Connection by choosing “Degree Progress/Graduation” from the left menu. Only students that have been advanced to candidacy can apply to graduate. The deadlines to apply for graduation are published in this guide, the Campus Connection Dates & Deadlines, and the School of Graduate Studies website. Please be sure you adhere to these deadlines.

### **Removal from graduation list**

After you have applied to graduate, you may be removed for various reasons. If your graduation is delayed, please email the School of Graduate Studies to let us know that you want your name removed from the graduation list. If you are removed from the list at the request of your advisor or the School of Graduate Studies, you will be notified.

Please note that if you are removed from the list, you will need to apply for graduation again in the semester you plan to graduate. You must also be enrolled in this term.

## Submit Preliminary Approval and Notice of Defense

**Recommended Time Frame:** You must submit this form by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate and no later than two weeks prior to your defense

Before you can schedule your defense, you need to receive preliminary approval from your Faculty Advisory Committee. You should plan on distributing a preliminary draft of your work to your committee members at least eight weeks before your tentative defense date; since, however, your specific program and advisory committee may have expectations that differ from this suggestion, make sure that you have consulted with your advisor and advisory committee for their specific expectations regarding when they expect distribution of a draft prior to a preliminary meeting. While a month to read and comment is typically sufficient, let them know well in advance of when you plan on distributing your first draft to ensure that they approve of the timeline and can schedule reading time into their calendars.

Be sure to allow yourself enough time to make the changes suggested or required by your committee. At this stage the changes may be significant, so you want to make sure you will be able to address them fully. Once you have made the appropriate corrections and your committee has approved the changes, you may request that they sign the Preliminary Approval form. Ideally, it would be helpful to you to get the committee together to discuss your draft and to sign the Preliminary Approval form. They should not sign the form until it has met their requirements.

**The Preliminary Approval form is for your protection** When your committee signs this form, they are stating that they accept the content, organization, and style of your dissertation. They are stating that you will not have to make any major changes or perform a new set of experiments for the final copy. Each committee member should read your dissertation prior to signing the Preliminary Approval Form

**Notice of defense** The first step for your defense is to work with your advisor and committee to schedule the date of the defense. All doctoral exams are published in the University Letter so that all interested faculty and the academic community may attend.

**If you miss the deadline** If this form is not received in the School of Graduate Studies by the posted deadline, you will need to reschedule your defense and potentially move your graduation date back one semester. The Preliminary Approval and Notice of Defense form is available on the School of Graduate Studies website. You must turn in this form by the published deadline and no later than two weeks prior to your scheduled defense.

## Hold Final Defense of your Thesis/Dissertation

Recommended Time Frame: By posted deadline

If you write a thesis or dissertation, you are required to appear before your entire advisory committee for a concluding examination or defense before you turn in the final copy of your work to the School of Graduate Studies. Be aware of the deadlines for final submission of dissertations when you schedule your defense. Academic calendars can be found in this guide, the UND dates and deadlines and online at the School of Graduate Studies website.

### **Your defense may be conducted in person or virtually**

The candidate and committee members must be present at the defense in person or at a distance using real-time synchronous technology. Any technology used to facilitate distance participation by the candidate or committee members must be supported by UND, capable of real-time audio and video, compatible with "presentation" software, such as PowerPoint, and must be open and accessible to the candidate, committee and non-committee members.

What is included in the defense varies from department to department. Some departments have students present their dissertation research in a presentation with a question/answer period following. Your advisor should be able to help you prepare.

Your examination will be conducted by your Faculty Advisory Committee. It is also open to the other members of the Graduate Faculty and the academic community. Your examination will consist of an oral portion and possibly a written one as well.

Although it will certainly cover your research, the examination is not restricted to your dissertation. Check with your advisor and department to see what is expected of you.

### **Approval of the committee**

Your committee will indicate their endorsement of you and your work by signing the Approval Page of your thesis or dissertation. The results of your defense will also be certified by your committee on the Final Report on Candidate form.

### **Pass/Fail**

For doctoral students, you may pass your examinations with no more than one opposing vote. The person who objects to passing you must provide the School of Graduate Studies with a written report of his/her decision. In this situation, only signatures of passing votes will be required on the final copy of your dissertation.

## Submit Electronic Thesis/Dissertation to UMI/ProQuest Publishing

Recommended Time Frame: You must submit your dissertation by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate

### Electronic Submission

You will find all the information you need on completing your dissertation on the School of Graduate Studies website, from completing paperwork, to format checking and electronically submitting your work through ProQuest.

- The [Thesis and Dissertation Support](#) guides you through the final steps with formatting and finalizing your manuscript to submitting it for publishing.
- You will upload your Dissertation in PDF format to the ProQuest ETD Administrator site.
- After you have completed a full check of your formatting, and you have made the changes required from your committee, you will submit the final version of your document electronically to UMI/ProQuest at [www.etsadmin.com/und](http://www.etsadmin.com/und).
- **Once you electronically submit your final copy for publishing, no changes are made to the format or content. Therefore, the burden of how the manuscript looks is entirely the responsibility of the student author.**

### Additional Copies

Check with your advisor, program director, or committee to see how many copies your department requires. Many students also provide the members of their advisory committee with a copy of the final version of the dissertation. Some choose to have them hard bound. Others do not. The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies recommends that you keep at least one hard copy of your dissertation for your records in addition to the electronic files. You may want to refer to the document in the future.

## Submit Final Copy of Your Independent Study (997), Scholarly Project (995), or Design Project (595) to Your Advisor

Recommended Time Frame: At least two weeks before commencement, although this may vary significantly depending on your program requirements for the non-thesis option. Check with your advisor for typical expectations and timelines.

As a non-thesis Master's student, you need to prepare a report on your independent study, scholarly project or design project for your advisor's approval. What this report entails and whether it requires a defense will vary depending on program requirements. In some cases, the report will need to be submitted to your advisor and an advisory committee; make certain that you know what is required for your degree project and schedule timelines accordingly. See your advisor or department for detailed information on what to include in the report. Check with your advisor to see how many copies your department needs.

Your advisor will certify that you completed your project by signing the "Final Report on Candidate", submitting the form to The School of Graduate Studies, and forwarding a grade to the Registrar's Office all by the deadline printed in the Academic Calendar. **Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to complete your non-thesis project in time to meet these deadlines.** Do not rely on your advisor to remind you of due dates.

## Complete Comprehensive Exams for Master's Students

Recommended Time Frame: Check with your department for this timeline

### **Written Exam**

Whether you are a Master's thesis or non-thesis student, you may have to take a written comprehensive examination before you can graduate (check with your department to see if they require comprehensive exams). The examination will cover your major field but may, at your advisor's discretion, also cover various supporting areas. Talk to your advisor to see what is expected of you. He/She will be able to help you prepare.

Your examination will be arranged by your advisor. You will qualify to take the examination only after you have advanced to candidacy (Step 5) and if you are in satisfactory academic standing.

### **Submit Results of Exam**

The results of your exam must be certified by your committee on a form titled "Final Report on Candidate" by the deadline specified on the Academic Calendar. This form is available at the School of Graduate Studies website. If you do not pass your examination, you may repeat it with the consent of your advisor, your department, and the School of Graduate Studies Dean, but at a date no earlier than the next regularly scheduled offering. Check with your advisor for more information.

## Submit the Final Report on Candidate (completed by committee chair or advisor)

Recommended Time Frame: This form must be submitted by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate

**Final Report on Candidate:  
Non-Thesis Option** This form certifies completion of an independent study, scholarly project, or design project, as well as the subject, date, and result of your final examination(s). It is essentially a written record of your fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. Your advisor and the graduate director of your department must sign this form.

**Final Report on Candidate:  
Thesis, Dissertation,  
Research Report, or  
Professional Exhibition  
Option** This form certifies completion of your oral defense and the required comprehensive exams required for the degree. Your advisor and committee members must indicate whether or not they found your performance at the examination to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory by signing their name and marking the appropriate column.

This form is the School of Graduate Studies' verification from your advisor and committee that you have finished the requirement for the degree. If this form is not received at the School of Graduate Studies by the published deadline, the School of Graduate Studies will remove your name from the graduation list and you will not be able to graduate that semester. You will then need to submit a new application for graduation for the semester you plan to graduate.

### **Diplomas:**

All diplomas are mailed out approximately six to eight weeks after graduation. Please be sure you have updated your mailing address on the Campus Connection System.

## Complete Survey of Earned Doctorates (Ph.D. only)

Recommended Time Frame: By posted deadline

Ph.D. Students need to complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) online at:

<https://sed-ncses.org/GradDateRouter.aspx>

You and the School of Graduate Studies-will receive a confirmation email after you have completed the survey.

## APPENDIX

### *Petitions*

School of Graduate Studies Petition forms are available at the graduate school website. The student must clearly state what is being petitioned and should always consult with his/her advisor and the program graduate director prior to submitting a petition to ensure both the necessity and the accuracy of the petition. Petitions may also require signatures from your advisor and/or the program graduate director. If the petition involves a specific course, the course number must be listed.

### *Leave of Absence and Readmission*

Degree and certificate seeking graduate students who wish to take a leave of absence from their program for fall or spring semester must notify their graduate program and the School of Graduate Studies by submission of a form requesting Readmission or Leave of Absence from Graduate Study in advance of their leave. Students will be required to obtain the program Graduate Director's signature from their department *prior* to submitting the form to the School of Graduate Studies. Summer semester is not counted as a break in enrollment.

Students who withdraw or take a leave of absence without submission of a leave of absence form, or who take an approved leave of absence but exceed the maximum allowed time for a leave, will be required to submit a "Readmission Application" to the School of Graduate Studies should they desire re-entry to the program. If the break in enrollment is longer than three (3) years, the student is not eligible for readmission and will need to submit a new admissions application. Applications for readmission will be reviewed and approved by the program and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. These forms can be found on our website.

### *Graduate Appointments*

A Graduate Assistant (GA) is both a university student and an employee. There are a variety of appointments available to students including Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), and Graduate Service Assistant (GSA). Although GAs are typically appointed on a half-time basis, some are appointed as quarter-time assistants. You must apply within your department for graduate assistantships. Check with your advisor or the graduate director of your department. See the School of Graduate Studies website [Graduate Assistantships](#) for detailed information on each of these positions.

### *Tuition Waivers*

The University of North Dakota offers tuition waivers for graduate students. These waivers are offered through the academic departments and colleges to various students. For questions about available tuition waivers, contact your advisor.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Do I need to be continually enrolled?**

No, this is not a School of Graduate Studies requirement, unless you are utilizing University services. However, some departments do require continuous enrollment so you do not lose your standing within the department. Check with your department for this requirement. You will need to be enrolled the semester you graduate.

### **Do I need to file a Leave of Absence or a Readmission application?**

You will only need to file a “*Readmission or Leave of Absence*” form if you should be but are not enrolled for the fall or spring semester (summer semester does not count as a break in enrollment).

### **Can I take undergraduate courses when I’m a graduate student?**

Your main goal as a graduate student should be to complete courses pertinent to your program of study. Some programs allow students to take undergraduate courses in their cognate, and it is understood that the student will be required to do additional work, over and above that typically required of undergraduates. Before registering for an undergraduate course, you must consult your advisor and/or the program graduate director to ensure that the course is acceptable for your program of study and will count towards the credits necessary for degree completion.

### **Can I take courses for S/U grading?**

Graduate students do not have the option of electing S/U grading in either graduate or undergraduate courses, unless that is the only way they are offered.

### **What happens if I can’t complete a course on time?**

If you can’t complete a course on time because of something beyond your control, you may request an incomplete grade. Your instructor may allow this if they feel that there is reasonable certainty that you will successfully complete the course without retaking it. The “Report of Incomplete Grade” form will need to be completed by the instructor. Please be aware that the work needs to be completed by the specified deadline that your instructor indicates on this form or the grade will convert to an F.

### **I received a D or F in one of my courses—can I retake it?**

Courses taken by graduate students for which a grade of D, F, or U was received may be repeated once for credit, with only the second grade to count in the grade point average. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the SGS when they have repeated a course. This option does not apply to students who have been dismissed.

### **What happens if I fall below a 3.00 GPA?**

If you fall below a 3.00 GPA your record will be reviewed. Students having accumulated 9 or more credit hours will be placed on academic probation for one semester; students having accumulated fewer than 9 credit hours will be placed on academic probation until either (a) the GPA is raised to at least 3.00 (2.75 for B.Engr.) or (b) 9 graduate credit hours are accumulated, whichever occurs first. If, at the end of the probationary period, the GPA is still less than 3.00 (2.75 for M. Engr.), the student will be dismissed. Students must maintain a 3.00 GPA to be eligible for assistantships.

### **What is considered full time?**

For students without an assistantship to be considered full time the minimum credits required in all semester are 9. To qualify for Federal Financial Aid, you must be registered in a minimum of 5 credits

(half-time status). Students with an assistantship must be registered for a minimum of 6 credits for each semester that they hold the assistantship.

**What are the reasons for grad registration holds?**

1. Prerequisites not completed on time as stated in your admission letter.
2. Failure to complete certain admission stipulations (ex. GRE tests)
4. Dismissals
5. Special Permission to Register

**How do I get loan deferments and enrollment verification?**

UND is using the National Student Clearinghouse for loan deferments and enrollment verification. Enrollment verifications can be printed from your Campus Connection.

**How do I change my advisor or committee?**

Complete the "Change" form and submit it to The School of Graduate Studies with the proper signatures. Be sure the Graduate Director of your department also signs this form, or it will be sent back to you.

**Will my credits for 995 Scholarly Project, 997 Independent Study, 998 Thesis, or 999 Dissertation remain an incomplete until I am finished?**

Yes, they will remain an incomplete until your final project is finished, successfully defended (if applicable), and the final copy is submitted. A grade of "SP" Satisfactory Progress, or "UP" Unsatisfactory Progress, will be assigned. The "SP" or the "UP" grades, which usually span several semesters, will be replaced by a grade at the conclusion of the activity, usually a student's final semester. Grades of "SP" or "UP" are not calculated into term or cumulative GPA values and will be expunged from the record upon submission of final grades.

**What can I enroll in if I'm finishing my thesis?**

If you have finished all your courses on your program of study, you can enroll in 996 continuing enrollment (1-9 credits) to finish your independent study, thesis, or dissertation. The fee is \$100 per credit. Continuing enrollment credits are not eligible for a tuition waiver. Do not enroll in more 998 thesis credits, or 999 dissertation credits than are on your program of study.

**How much does the electronic submission of my thesis/dissertation cost?**

The only required charge when submitting your manuscript is for a hard-bound copy to be kept at the Chester Fritz Library. Other optional fees may be charged depending on the publishing agreement you choose and if you choose to register a copyright. You may also choose to order personal bound copies of your manuscript during the submission process for an additional fee. Please refer to our website for more information on the submittal process.



[UND.edu/gradschool](https://UND.edu/gradschool)