

Graduate Student Handbook

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Welcome to NDSU!

Now that you have been admitted to graduate school, you may have all sorts of questions about what to do next. This guide will help you navigate the start to your graduate career and also provides long-term planning advice to help you complete your degree.

What to Expect

Attending graduate school is very different from an undergraduate experience. Graduate School is self-directed. Students are responsible for learning the policies and procedures necessary to earn the graduate degree. Students can expect academic rigor, including a higher level of reading and writing.

There are also wonderful opportunities that are part of the graduate student experience. Students often develop collegial relationships with other students. There are opportunities to conduct and present research, choose areas of research specific to interests and participate in department and college committees and development opportunities.

You will also find the traditional educational, cultural, and athletic offerings of a university campus at NDSU.

Student Responsibility

- You are responsible to learn and observe the policies, procedures and deadlines of the Graduate School, the institution and your graduate program.
- You must also initiate the forms required during the course of your graduate students. Deadlines for submitting documents are listed in this handbook under the form named.
- You are responsible for maintaining satisfactory academic standing and progress towards your degree. All graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative 3.00 GPA.
- Lack of awareness or understanding of a rule is not a valid reason for an exception to the rule.

NDSU Email Address

Your NDSU email is an official communication channel. Occasionally the Graduate School sends notifications via the graduate student listserv regarding professional development opportunities and events. Add NDSU-Grad-Students@listserv.nodak.edu to your address book to ensure you are aware of current activities.

Secrets of Success in Graduate School

While each individual is different, there are a few tips that should help anyone seeking their graduate degree.

Get to know other students. Students provide a support system that will help you not only with moral support, but possibly advice regarding your department, NDSU, and the Graduate School. The [Graduate Student Council](#) (GSC) is a great way to meet other students.

Plan Ahead. The planning you do now will save you time as you complete your degree.

- Discuss your professional goals with your adviser.
- Develop an Individual Degree Plan (IDP, myIDP.org) and update your adviser on your pro-

gress.

- Work with your adviser to form a supervisory committee and submit your Plan of Study by the end of your first year of study.
- Schedule yearly meetings with your supervisory committee.

Use your resources. Your adviser, supervisory committee, department, GSC and the Graduate School want you to be successful. Utilize them when you need assistance. There are also other resources on campus to help: the Graduate Center for Writers, Counseling Center, etc.

The University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School has a handbook with good information regarding being a mentee, especially pages 11-13.

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/mentoring.pdf>

Graduate Student Council (GSC)

All graduate students are members of the Graduate Student Council (GSC). The GSC is the representative voice of graduate students at NDSU, formulating policy and advising the Dean of the Graduate School, the Faculty Senate, and the President of the University on the graduate student body's viewpoint concerning all matters affecting graduate student life.

The GSC also hosts social programming and professional development opportunities. All graduate students are encouraged to share their feedback at the monthly forums and to participate in the planning of events and outreach activities.

Your Adviser

The role of the adviser will vary among programs and degree types. Even within the same program different advisers may have different perspectives on the adviser role.

At the graduate level many advisers will expect students to take initiative and be proactive. Discuss with your adviser his/her availability, preferred meeting frequency and preferred mode of communication.

The Graduate School

The Role of the Graduate School

The Graduate School is the processing center for all documents necessary for completion of the graduate degree, from admission to graduation. Graduate School staff work with students to provide policy interpretation, assistance with completing forms, auditing of completion requirements, and disquisition review. In addition, the Graduate School offers opportunities for professional development, support services, and funding.

We want you to be successful in your graduate studies

Academic Support Specialists

The Academic Support staff work with specific colleges (listed below) and the departments within

those colleges. They serve as liaisons among the Graduate School, students, and departments; monitor student progress; interpret policies; serve as a resource for academic departments; and review all student documents to ensure they follow Graduate School policies and procedures.

Kate Nelson DeShaw	701-231-6456	Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences Business Health Professions
Robin Cummings Pas	701-231-8547	Engineering Interdisciplinary Studies Science and Mathematics
Melissa Selders-Ortez	701-231-5945	Agriculture, Food Systems & Natural Resources Human Development and Education

Center for Writers

The Center for Writers offers assistance for those with writing concerns, such as questions about formatting, editing and citations and other services. The Center for Writers is located in the lower level of the main Library.

Policies

Below are a few of the policies of which you need to be aware. All policies may be found in the Graduate Bulletin and the NDSU website.

Continuous Enrollment

Students are required to register for at least one credit each semester (fall and spring) until all degree requirements are completed, including Graduate School approval of the thesis, paper, or dissertation. A student may request a Leave of Absence if s/he must interrupt their graduate studies. Summer registration is required for students completing a preliminary or final examination that semester.

Scholastic Standards

To be in academic good standing and to receive a graduate degree, a student must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0. While some courses may be used for graduate credit with a grade of C, courses with grades of D, F, and U may not be used for graduate credit. .

Graduate School Holds

The Graduate School places holds on a student's registration for three reasons:

Degree Confirmation

Please refer to your admission letter.

Conditional Admission

If your cumulative GPA is above 3.0 at the end of the term, the hold will be moved to the next semester until the required number of credits have been completed.

Academic Warning/Probation

The Graduate School must monitor your grades at the end of each semester until you return to good standing. Please refer to the letter received regarding your status.

Holds will not be moved until grades post or you have completed the conditions of your admission.

Acceptable Use Guidelines for Electronic Communication Resources

University IT users should be aware that, except where precluded by law, the University has the right to measure and monitor ECD usage, including but not limited to storing, accessing, and reviewing information received or sent through e-mail or over the internet. Monitoring of an individual's Internet use is possible when requested by the appropriate official. In addition, internet sites deemed by the University to be unrelated to the University's responsibilities may be blocked, and the University will cooperate with any law enforcement investigation.

Detailed information may be found on the ITS website: <https://www.ndsu.edu/its/security/au/> .

Code of Student Conduct

North Dakota State University (NDSU) students have an opportunity to gain the most from their education when every member of the NDSU community takes responsibility to observe and help maintain a code of personal conduct that contributes to the educational effectiveness of the University. The Code of Student Conduct is derived from three core values that support an educationally purposeful environment:

- Respect for the NDSU Community;
- Respect for the Protection and Rights of Others; and
- Respect for individuals in the Conduct Resolution Process.

The intent of this Code is to foster educational development of personal accountability and commitment to the community. The Code in its entirety may be found here:

<https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/601.pdf> .

Graduate Assistantships/Tuition Waivers

- Tuition waivers cover base tuition only. You are responsible for student fees and other expenses. The tuition waiver may be reduced by other financial awards directed specifically to pay tuition.
- Graduate assistants must work a minimum of 10 hours per week for 16 weeks, and must receive at least minimum wage. Graduate assistantships cannot exceed 20 hours per week.
- Students receiving a graduate assistantship or fellowship are expected to maintain good academic standing and satisfactory progress toward their degrees.
- Students receiving a graduate assistantship are expected to complete required trainings annually within 30 days of accepting their appointment. Failure to complete training can lead to sanctions, including revocation of the tuition waiver and termination of the assistantship.
- Teaching assistants whose native language is not English must demonstrate English proficiency (refer to section titled "English Language Proficiency Procedures for Graduate Teaching Assistants").
- Students offered a graduate teaching or graduate service assistantship must consent to a criminal background check.

Required Training for Graduate Students

**Please check with your program to determine if additional training is required. Check websites for face to face options for training sessions and contact information.*

Training Topic	Who	How often
<u>Baseline Safety</u>	All graduate assistants	Annually
<u>Equal Opportunity/Title IX</u>	All graduate assistants	Annually
Defensive Driving	Drivers of State Fleet vehicles or NDSU leased vehicles	Every four years
<u>Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)</u>	Those who work with infectious agents or recombinant DNA	Must be completed and documented prior to starting research or teaching. One time training.
Laboratory & Chemical Safety	Those who will be using hazardous chemicals in a laboratory, greenhouse, or field site	Once every three years. Should be completed prior to working in a laboratory.
Radiation Safety	Those who work with radioisotopes	Must be completed and documented prior to starting research
<u>Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)</u>	Those for whom any aspect of their work is funded by NSF or NIH (recommended for all Graduate Students doing research)	CITI modules should be completed and documented prior to starting research.
<u>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</u>	Those whose research will involve human subjects	Must be completed and documented prior to starting research or teaching. Once every three years.
<u>Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)</u>	Those whose research will involve vertebrate animals	Must be completed and documented prior to starting research or teaching. Refresher every three years.

NDSU Services

Bison Card

All students must get a Bison Card (Student ID) **on or before the first day of classes**. The Bison Card Center in Memorial Union issues the Bison Card. There are several essential services that will only be given to students who have their Bison Card on their person.

Notably, you will need your Bison Card to:

- Charge books at the NDSU bookstore
- Access the Wallman Wellness Center
- Ride the campus bus system
- Use computer cluster printers
- Check out books from the library

NDSU Libraries

The NDSU Libraries serve the information needs of NDSU students, faculty, and staff. Librarians are available to provide services for specific academic disciplines. Find the Subject Librarian for your department by calling the Reference Desk at (701) 231-8886.

Counseling Center

The NDSU Counseling Center provides a confidential setting in which students may explore concerns of a personal or academic nature; makes referrals; and serves as consultants for faculty and staff. The Counseling Center also offers a Graduate Student Support Group (see website for day/ time). Talk with other graduate students who share similar concerns and understand the struggles of balancing home, school, and work life.

Wallman Wellness Center

Membership to the Wellness Center is included in student fees and includes a variety of cardio and weight equipment, intramural and recreation sport opportunities, rock climbing, numerous courts, group exercise classes, an aquatic center, personal training (extra fee), and more.

Campus Safety

The Campus Safety Escorts are conducted by NDSU police officers and/or public safety officers on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Pathlight[®] security app allows NDSU dispatchers to remotely track a user (on or off campus) on a monitor in the NDSU Police Communications Call Center any time the user initiates a safety assist, such as prior to walking alone across campus at night. The call center is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

One Stop

One Stop is a service center that provides information about your student account, financial aid, scholarships, tuition, bill payments, registration, and student records maintenance in a convenient, online location, as well as an on-campus location in the Memorial Union where helpful, full-time staff are available to assist students in person, by phone, or by email.

NDSU Services

Bookstore

www.ndsubookstore.com
701-231-7761

NDSU Card Center

www.ndsu.edu/cardcenter
701-231-6252
ndsu.cardcenter@ndsu.edu

Career Center

www.career.ndsu.edu
701-231-7111
ndsu.career.center@ndsu.edu

Childcare Services

www.ndsu.edu/wellness/childcare
701-231-5203

Counseling Center

www.ndsu.edu/counseling
701-231-7671

Disability Services

www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices
701-231-8463
ndsu.disability.services@ndsu.edu

Graduate Center for Writers

<https://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/>

Graduate Policies

<https://bulletin.ndsu.edu/graduate/policies>

Graduate Student Council

https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/about/campus_involvement/gsc

NDSU Libraries

<https://library.ndsu.edu>
701-231-8753

IT Help Desk

www.ndsu.edu/its/help_desk
701-231-8685 (option 1)
ndsu.helpdesk@ndsu.edu

International Student Services

www.ndsu.edu/international
701-231-7895
ndsu.international@ndsu.edu

Office of Multicultural Programs

www.ndsu.edu/multicultural
701-231-1029
ndsu.multicultural@ndsu.edu

One Stop

www.ndsu.edu/onestop
701-231-6200
ndsu.onestop@ndsu.edu

University Police and Safety Office

www.ndsu.edu/police_safety
701-231-8998

Degree Completion Requirements

Select Supervisory Committee Members

Timeline: End of second semester

You, along with your adviser, will identify your supervisory committee members. Form a supervisory committee as early as possible and establish a plan for meetings and feedback. It is recommended that you interact with the full committee at least annually.

Plan A and B Master's

In addition to the adviser:

- A second member, who must be a full or affiliate member of the graduate faculty.
- A third member, who could be either a faculty member from outside the student's program or a qualified off-campus expert in the field. If this committee member is not a full or affiliate member of the graduate faculty, the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College is required. Approval by the dean requires a memo from the program/department chair explaining the qualifications of the person to be on the committee and the person's curriculum vitae.

Plan C Master's

Requires only an adviser; however, departments may have additional requirements for committee membership.

Doctoral Committees

In addition to the adviser:

- A second member, who must be a full or affiliate member of the graduate faculty.
- A third member, who could be either a faculty member from outside the student's program or a qualified off-campus expert in the field. If this committee member is not a full or affiliate member of the graduate faculty, the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College is required. Approval by the dean requires a memo from the program/department chair explaining the qualifications of the person to be on the committee and the person's curriculum vitae.
- A fourth member, the Graduate School Representative (GSR) The role of the GSR is to ensure policies are followed, expectations for the student's performance are reasonable and interactions with the supervisory committee are conducted in a professional manner.

THE GSR MUST BE

- ⇒ a full member of the graduate faculty, AND
- ⇒ be either a tenured faculty member outside the committee chair's/co-chairs' home department(s) OR
- ⇒ a faculty member outside the primary college of the committee chair/co-chairs.
- ⇒ if the student is in an interdisciplinary program, the GSR must also be outside of that program.
- ⇒ **be clear of any conflicts of interest with either the student or the**

committee chair/co-chairs. Examples of possible conflicts of interest may include budgetary relationships, family or financial, personal relationships, or research and/or publication relationships between the GSR and either the student or the committee chair.

Committee Changes

Revisions may be made, with the Request for Change form, later as advisable and necessary, but must be approved by the student, adviser, the administrator of the student's program, and the graduate dean.

Submit Plan of Study

Timeline: End of second semester

Once these minimum requirements have been met, any other graduate courses can be used to satisfy the remaining Plan of Study requirements. The various programs determine which approved graduate courses may be used. For specific requirements, the student should consult the graduate program coordinator and/or academic adviser.

Didactic Credits Didactic credits are courses numbered 601-689, 691; 700-789, 791; 800-889 and 891.

Plan A Master's

Plan A Master's Degree

- Minimum 30 credits total
- 16 of the 30 must be didactic credits
- 6-10 credits of research (798 Master's Thesis)

Plan B Master's

Plan B Master's Degree

- Minimum 30 credits total
- 21 of the 30 must be didactic credits
- 2-4 credits of research (797 Master's Paper)

Plan C Master's

No Plan of Study form is required. If your program requires a supervisory committee you must complete the _____ form.

Doctoral

Bachelor's to Doctoral Degree

- Minimum 90 credits total
- 27 of the 90 must be didactic credits
- 15 of the 27 must be should be 700 or 800 level course work

Master's to Doctoral Degree

- Minimum 60 credits total completed at NDSU
- 15 of the 60 credits must be 700-800 level didactic courses

Transfer credit

Master's students may transfer up to a maximum of 10 semester hours of graduate credit from another institution to satisfy course requirements on the Plan of Study. Credits are transferred at the time the Plan of Study is approved.

Bachelor's to Doctoral students: the doctorate requires 27 credits of course work, and of these, no more than 12 may be transferred.

Non-degree Credits

A student may use up to 10 credits taken as a non-degree NDSU graduate student toward the degree.

Changes to Plan of Study

Revisions may be made, with the Request for Change form, later as advisable and necessary, but must be approved by the student, adviser, the administrator of the student's program, and the graduate dean.

Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Students (excluding DNP)

A **comprehensive/preliminary examination** will be required of each student after the greater portion of courses has been completed. This examination consists of a written part and an oral part. After passing the comprehensive/preliminary examination, the student will be formally admitted to candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. At least one academic semester must elapse between the comprehensive/preliminary examination and the final examination.

Prior to Exam

A Notification of Scheduled Exam form must be filed in the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the examination date. At that time a preliminary graduation audit will be completed.

- If the notification form is not submitted at least two weeks prior to the exam, **the exam cannot move forward**. Exams conducted without filing the notification will be considered invalid and must be rescheduled and retaken.
- After approval, the student and supervisory committee will be sent the approved notification form, preliminary graduation audit and a link to the report form for the exam.

After the Exam

At the conclusion of the examination, the examining committee shall record, in writing, approval or disapproval. The Report of Preliminary Exam must be filed with the Graduate School within 14 days of the exam.

- A negative vote by more than one member of the student's committee will signify failure of either the comprehensive/preliminary examination or the final examination. With permission of a majority of the supervisory committee members, a candidate is allowed to take each examination twice. The supervisory committee will set a date at least one month after the failed examination.
- Should both attempts to pass an examination result in failure, the candidate may request to take the examination a third time. A request for a third examination requires the support of the supervisory committee and program administrator, and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School after consultation with the Graduate Council.

Final Examination

The **final examination**, commonly known as the “defense”, will be taken after the candidate has completed the course work and disquisition. This oral examination shall cover the course work taken by the candidate and also the disquisition, seminar papers, or oral examination paper and fundamental knowledge.

Prior to Exam

A Notification of Scheduled Exam form must be filed in the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the examination date.

- If the notification form is not submitted at least two weeks prior to the exam, **the exam cannot move forward**. Exams conducted without filing the notification will be considered invalid and must be rescheduled and retaken.
- The disquisition in a near final form must be given to the committee members no fewer than seven (7) days prior to the examination. If this seven 7-day stipulation cannot be met, the student must either secure the concurrence of all committee members or reschedule the examination.
- After approval, the student and supervisory committee will be sent the approved notification form, preliminary graduation audit and a link to the report form for the exam.

After the Exam

At the conclusion of the examination, the examining committee shall record, in writing, approval or disapproval. The Report of Final Exam must be filed with the Graduate College within 14 days of the exam.

- A negative vote by more than one member of the student's committee will signify failure of either the comprehensive/preliminary examination or the final examination. With permission of a majority of the supervisory committee members, a candidate is allowed to take each examination twice. The supervisory committee will set a date at least one month after the failed examination.
- Should both attempts to pass an examination result in failure, the candidate may request to take the examination a third time. A request for a third examination requires the support of the supervisory committee and program administrator, and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College after consultation with the Graduate Council.

Master Degree Checklist

Please check our website for updated information and deadlines: ndsu.edu/gradschool

- Select the members of your Supervisory Committee, if applicable (Recommended: First or Second Semester)
- Submit Your Program of Study, if applicable. (Recommended: First or Second Semester)
- Complete "Intent to Graduate" (You must submit by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)

Graduation Requirements for non-master's paper/ non- master's thesis programs

- 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 Final Exam (If applicable, check with your department for this requirement)
- "Final Report" on Candidate form will be submitted to the Graduate School. (This form will be submitted to the Graduate School by your Adviser, and by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate)

Graduation Requirements for master's thesis/ master's paper Completion

- Submit Notification of Scheduled Exam form to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to your scheduled defense.
- Hold your oral defense (final examination).
- Submit Report of Final Examination and IRB, IACUC and IBC Compliance Form (and supporting documentation if applicable) to the Graduate School within seven days of the exam.
- Complete supervisory committee changes to the dissertation.
- Once completed, submit the signed Approval page to the Graduate School.
- Complete doctoral dissertation video. Some programs may require the video to be completed prior to the final defense.
- Submit dissertation to the Graduate School for format review.
- Complete format review

Doctoral Checklist

Please check our website for updated information and deadlines: ndsu.edu/gradschool

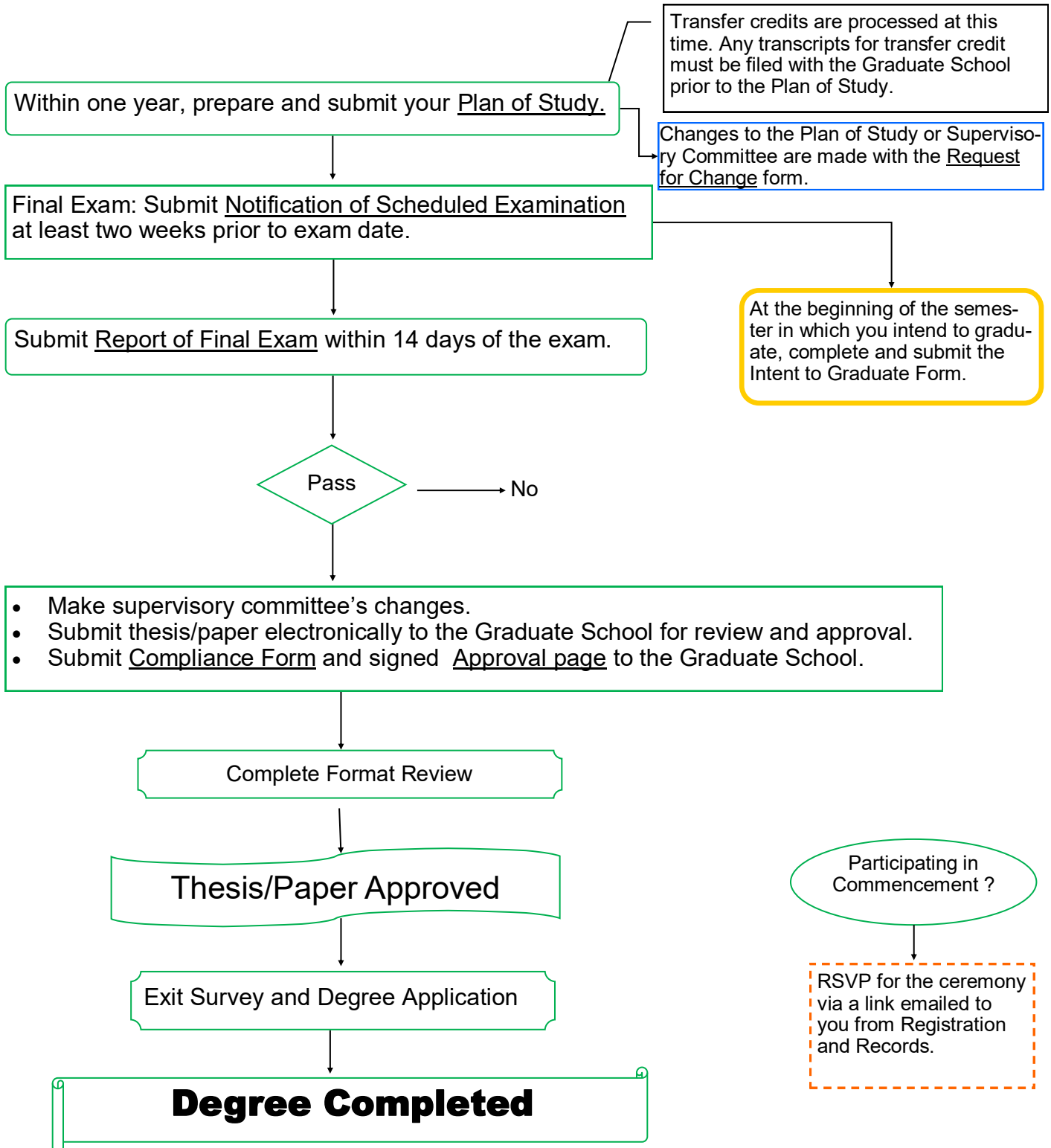
- Select the members of your Supervisory Committee (Recommended: Second Semester)
- Submit your Plan of Study (Recommended: Second Semester)
- Complete Comprehensive Exams (To be taken once a substantial amount of coursework has been completed)
- Apply to Graduate by the published deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate.

Graduation Requirements for Dissertation Completion

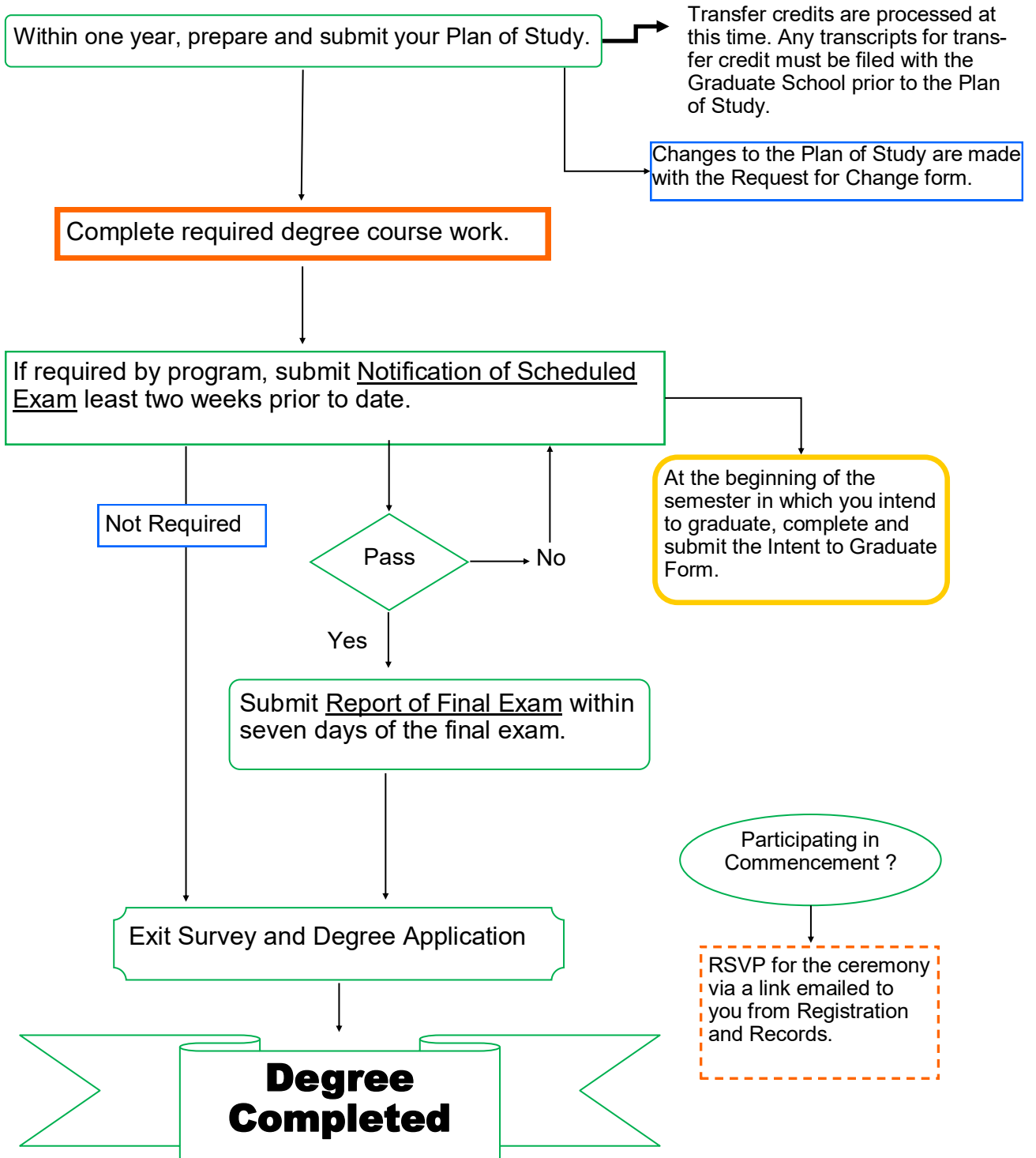
- Submit Notification of Scheduled Exam form to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to your scheduled defense.
- Hold your oral defense (final examination).
- Submit Report of Final Examination and IRB, IACUC and IBC Compliance Form (and supporting documentation if applicable) to the Graduate School within seven days of the exam.
- Complete supervisory committee changes to the dissertation.
- Once completed, submit the signed Approval page to the Graduate School.
- Complete doctoral dissertation video. Some programs may require the video to be completed prior to the final defense.
- Submit dissertation to the Graduate School for format review.
- Complete format review
- Complete Survey of Earned Doctorates.

Path to Plan A/Plan B Master's Degree

Students must maintain continuous enrollment until all degree requirements are completed. Students may request a leave of absence if necessary.

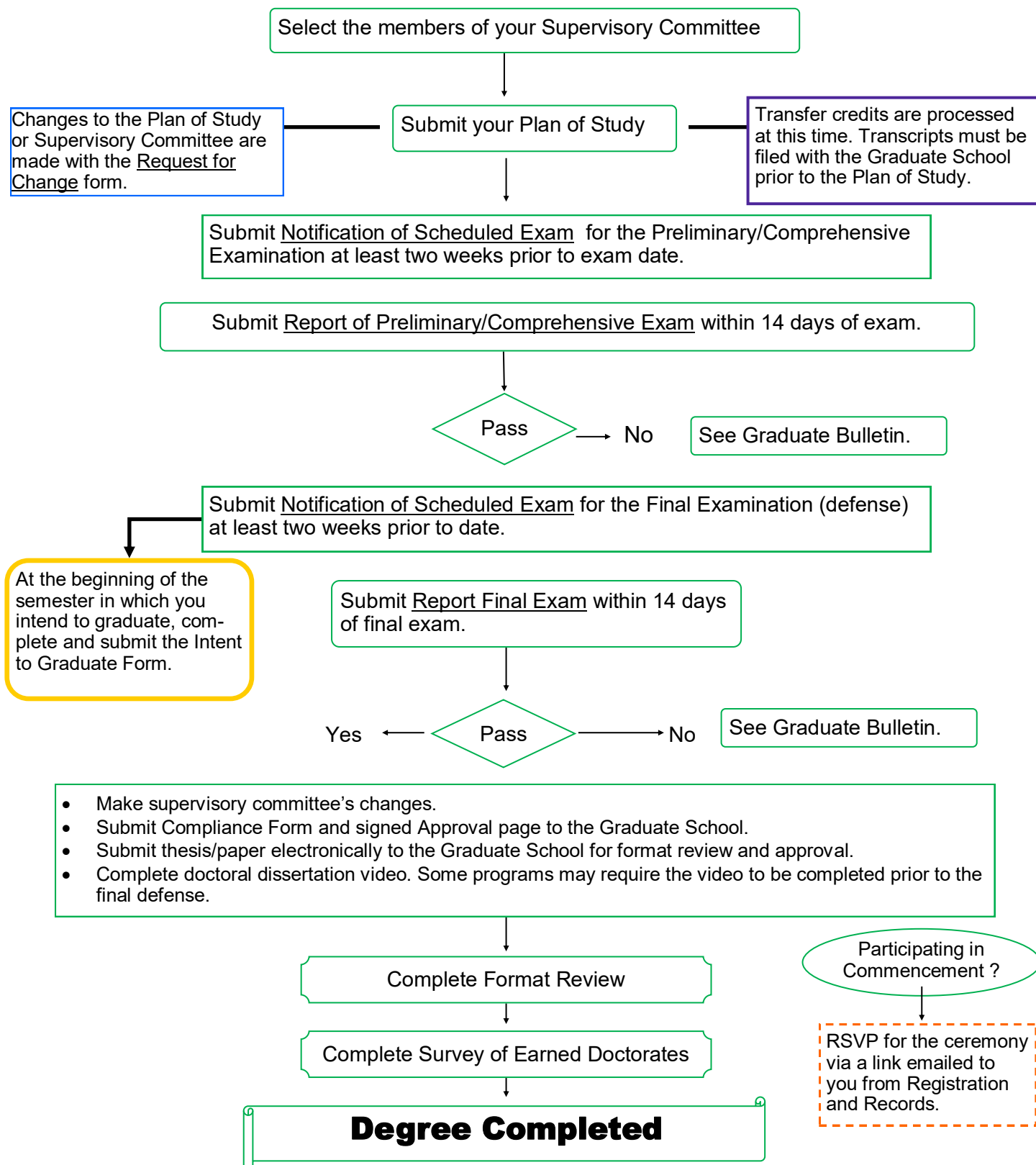


Non-Thesis Master's Programs



Path to Doctoral Degree

Students must maintain continuous enrollment until all degree requirements are completed. Students may request a leave of absence if necessary.



Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I have a hold on my student account?

There are three types of holds you might have from the Graduate School (other holds may exist from the Financial Aid office):

- Degree verification: if we're waiting on a transcript from a previous degree, there will be a hold on your account
- Conditional admit: if you were conditionally admitted to your program, there will be a hold and you should check your admission letter for more details on the conditions of your admission
- Academic standing: if your GPA falls below 3.0 at any time a hold will be placed on your account and removed once you bring your GPA back to 3.0 or higher

How do I know who my adviser is?

Your academic adviser is listed on your student profile on Campus Connection, which is the site you will use to register for courses, pay fees, etc.

How do I change my adviser?

You can change your academic adviser at any time by submitting a Request for Change to Plan of Study form located on the Graduate School website. Even if you do not have a Plan of Study on file with us, you can submit the form to indicate you wish to change your adviser.

How can I submit forms to the Graduate School?

You may submit forms to the Graduate school in person at Putnam Hall 106, via regular postal mail or on campus mail, or you can scan the form in and email to ndsugrad.school@ndsus.edu.

Ensure that your forms are completed and all necessary signatures are gathered.

Who is my Graduate Program Coordinator?

Every academic department has a faculty member who serves as their Graduate Coordinator – this person typically needs to sign forms for the Graduate School and they review them to make sure they know is happening with their program's graduate students. This person might be your academic adviser, but not necessarily. To find out who your program's coordinator is, you might ask your adviser or contact the Graduate School.

Who is my Academic Support Specialist?

Within the Graduate School, there are three full-time professional staff members who work with certain academic colleges and liaise between students, their academic departments and faculty, and the Graduate School. They may assist you with any policy questions or help you move through the process toward earning your degree. They are:

- Melissa Selders-Ortez:* College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources
College of Human Development and Education
- Robin Cummings Pas:* College of Engineering
College of Math and Science

Kate Nelson DeShaw: Interdisciplinary Studies
College of Business
College of Health Professions
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

What happens if my GPA falls below 3.0?

Students admitted full-standing are placed on academic warning. Conditionally admitted students will be placed on academic probation. A student cannot register for the following semester until the grades for the current semester post.

Is there a time limit to finish my degree?

Master's students have seven calendar years to complete coursework and final defense (if applicable). The time limitation for a doctoral degree is 10 years.

The student will have one (1) year from the date of the final examination to complete the Graduate School disquisition review process and all other degree requirements.

Do I need to be enrolled each semester?

You are required to register for at least one credit each fall and spring semester to maintain continuous enrollment. You may file for a Leave of Absence for up to four semesters (fall and spring).

How many credits do I need to take to be a full-time student?

Nine credits are considered a full-time graduate load. Graduate Assistants working 20 hours per week are considered full-time if registered for five or more graduate credits.

International students may have other registration requirements. Consult your international adviser for more information.