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, 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.

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. There are several steps that need to be taken in order to complete your degree. Familiarize your self with the required paperwork and timelines to avoid issues down the road. Resources available for planning include the Graduate Bulletin, department handbook, your Student Service Associate and the NDSU Graduate School web site.

Use your resources. Your adviser, 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.

Memorize your student ID number. You will need this number to identify yourself when contacting departments on campus.

Graduate Student Council (GSC)

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

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

Your Academic Department and Adviser

Graduate advisers play a key role in the academic life of students. When a graduate student
enters a department to do graduate work, s/he is assigned a faculty adviser. It is the graduate adviser who formally approves students' programs of study, advises them on advancement to candidacy for higher degrees, etc.

**Employment**

If you are a Graduate Assistant, Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant, you should review the policies in the Graduate School Bulletin regarding these positions. International students are required to get a Social Security number to be paid on campus.

**Payroll**

Payday is the last day of the month for the period from the first day of the month to the fifteenth day of the month, and the fifteenth day of the following month for the period from the sixteenth day of the month to the end of the month; however, if the pay date should fall on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the preceding work day is payday.

**Required Training for Graduate Students**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Topic</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>How often</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline Safety</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harassment and Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>First year – both Sexual harassment training – annnually</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title IX</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defensive Driving</td>
<td>Drivers of State Fleet vehicles or NDSU leased vehicles</td>
<td>Every four years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)</td>
<td>Those who work with infectious agents or recombinant DNA</td>
<td>Must be completed and documented prior to starting research or teaching. One time training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory &amp; Chemical Safety</td>
<td>Those who will be using hazardous chemicals in a laboratory, greenhouse, or field site</td>
<td>Once every three years. Should be completed prior to working in a laboratory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Safety</td>
<td>Those who work with radioisotopes</td>
<td>Must be completed and documented prior to starting research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)</td>
<td>Those for whom any aspect of their work is funded by NSF or NIH (recommended for all Graduate Students doing research)</td>
<td>CITI modules should be completed and documented prior to starting research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</td>
<td>Those whose research will involve human subjects</td>
<td>Must be completed and documented prior to starting research or teaching. Once every three years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)</td>
<td>Those whose research will involve vertebrate animals</td>
<td>Must be completed and documented prior to starting research or teaching. Refresher every three years.</td>
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*Become familiar with policies in the [NDSU Policy Manual](#) 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.*
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.

Graduate School Website

The Graduate School home page is the most important resource for Graduate School information. It is important that you become familiar with policies and procedures within the Graduate School. Some information is included in this handbook, but please use the graduate bulletin for additional policies.

“Current Students” contains forms, funding opportunities, professional development opportunities and other important topics. When you are nearing the end of your degree program, you should refer to the Graduating Students link for timelines, forms, procedures to make completing your degree a smooth process.

Student Services Associates (SSA)

The Student Service Associates work with specific colleges and the departments within those colleges. They serve as a liaison among the Graduate School, students, and the department; s/he monitors students’ progress, interprets policy, and serves as a resource for academic departments. SSAs review all student documents to ensure they follow Graduate School policies and procedures.

SSA’s are an excellent source for answers. Questions now will save you time and frustration later.

- Madonna Fitzgerald  231-6456  
  College of:  
  Interdisciplinary Studies  
  Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
  Business

- Britney Knowlton  231-8547  
  College of:  
  Engineering  
  Science and Mathematics

- Melissa Selders-Ortez  231-5945  
  College of:  
  Agriculture, Food Systems & Natural Resources  
  Human Development & Education  
  Health Professions

Graduate School Policies

It is important to familiarize yourself with Graduate School and NDSU policies. Below are descriptions of the most commonly asked about policies, as well as the URL to where the policy may be found. There is also a Code of Student Conduct by which students must abide.
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.

Conditional Admission
If you were admitted conditionally into your graduate program, it will be clearly stated in your admission letter. Any student admitted in CONDITIONAL status is automatically placed on academic WARNING until the conditions of admission are met. The student may not earn more than 12 semester hours of graduate credit while in conditional status.

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. Programs and/or supervisory committees may require a higher performance.

Academic Warning
Any student in good standing whose cumulative grade point average drops to less than 3.0 at any time of attendance is automatically placed on Academic Warning.

A student on academic WARNING cannot register for following semester until the grades for the current semester post.

Academic Probation
A student on academic PROBATION may not continue the pursuit of a graduate degree program without a recommendation from the appropriate program administrator and a waiver from the Dean of the Graduate School. A student on academic PROBATION is not eligible for a graduate assistantship or tuition waiver.

Dismissal from the Graduate School
Graduate students may be dismissed from NDSU as a result of failure to meet our scholastic standards, academic or professional misconduct, insufficient progress toward a degree, or failure to meet professional expectations or standards.

Students dismissed from the Graduate School are not eligible for admission into any degree-granting or certificate program or into non-degree status for a period of at least one calendar year from the date of the dismissal. Dismissal does not become complete until the completion of any appeal process.

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.
**Enrollment Status**
The Graduate School does not require students to be maintain full-time status. Nine credits are considered a full-time graduate load. To receive financial aid, students must be enrolled at least half-time (5+ credits). Eligibility varies with financial aid programs and students should contact their lender for requirements.

Graduate Assistants working 20 hours per week are considered full-time if registered for five or more graduate credits. Federal law requires all international students with a 20-hour per week assistantship to carry at least six graduate credits for full-time status.

*International students should talk to their international student adviser regarding the credit requirements to maintain their visa status.*

Graduate students wishing to register for more than 15 credits in a regular semester shall secure the approval of their department chair and the Dean of the Graduate School.

**IRB/IBC/IACUC Approval**
Approval must be obtained before the research project commences and cannot be granted retroactively. If a proposed graduate research project involves human, animal, or biohazard subjects, it must be submitted for review and approval by

- Institutional Review Board (IRB)-human subjects
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)-vertebrate animals and/or
- Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)-biohazards

**Transfer of Credit**
Any credits transferred from another institution are processed at the time the Plan of Study is approved. Please refer to the policy regarding credit transfer for specific information about which courses may be used for transfer credit.

Credits taken as a non-degree graduate student at NDSU are not considered transfer credit. A student may use up to 10 credits taken as a non-degree NDSU graduate student on the Plan of Study.
NDSU Basics

Campus
NDSU's campus is about 41 square blocks and includes more than 100 major buildings, including 4 in historic downtown Fargo. In all, NDSU is located on more than 22,000 acres of North Dakota land, which includes the main Agricultural Experimental Station in Fargo and seven research centers located throughout the state.

Smoking is prohibited on the North Dakota State University grounds and in University buildings, residence halls, apartments and enclosed structures.

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

Bison Bucks
Bison Bucks is a debit account tied to your Bison Card. Use it on your purchases at all of NDSU Dining Services' operations, the NDSU Bookstore, Herd Shop, Copy Shop, Wallman Wellness Center, NDSU Downtown Campus and ITS Laser Output. Also, with your Bison Bucks account you can purchase pop at select vending machines on campus.

Academic Resources

Libraries
The NDSU Libraries serve the information needs of North Dakota State University 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.

Wireless Access
Wireless Internet access is available at most public locations on campus and in student rooms, lounges and study areas in the residence halls.

Wireless is also available at two outdoor "green spaces" on campus:
- The Babbling Brook - North of the South Engineering building
- Dakota Plaza - Next to the Geosciences building, just west of the Family Life Center

Bookstores
The NDSU Bookstore is a full-service college bookstore located on the main floor in Memorial
Union, with a branch in Barry Hall. The bookstore is the official source of NDSU Course Materials. The textbook department is located in the lower level of the store.

The bookstore is unique in that it is an authorized seller of Dell and Apple computers. The Electronics department also features a service technician to assist customers in using their computer.

**Student Support Services**

NDSU strives to provide students with the help and support that they need through a variety of programs, groups and activities. Below is information about some of the services available.

**Graduate Center for Writers**

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

**Counseling Center**

The NDSU Counseling Center provides a confidential setting in which students may explore concerns of a personal, academic, or career-related nature; makes referrals; and serves as consultants for faculty and staff. Students in counseling can explore a variety of concerns which may prevent them from functioning at their optimum levels.

The Counseling Center also offers a Graduate Student Support Group Fridays from 3-4:30. Talk with other graduate students who share similar concerns and understand the struggles of balancing home, school, and work life.

**Childcare**

The Wellness Center Child Care Service is a licensed service provided to NDSU students. Trained staff and student workers are on hand to properly care for children on a reservation or drop-off basis.

**Campus Safety**

The NDSU Escort Service provides someone to escort you on the main campus and the immediate surrounding area. Request this 24-hour service by calling 231-8998. This service is provided by University Police officers or Public Safety officers. This service is limited to on-campus locations or the immediate vicinity of NDSU.

The NDSU Personal Safety and Security Assist service includes a smartphone security application called Pathlight®. It allows NDSU dispatchers to remotely track a user 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 around the clock every day of the year.

**International Students**

The Office of International Student and Study Abroad Services at NDSU office provides advising and support services for prospective and enrolled international students. During their stay at NDSU, international students can seek advice from international student advisors on
matters such as immigration requirements, employment, adjusting to life in the United States, health and personal issues, and academic problems.

**Multicultural Students**

The Office of Multicultural Programs connects with multicultural students, faculty, and staff currently at NDSU by informing them of on and off campus resources to help them succeed and excel at NDSU. Multicultural students, along with the Office of Multicultural Programs, offer campus-wide cultural programming throughout the year.

**Campus Groups and General Resources (ndsu.orgsync.com)**

Many departments have graduate students groups that foster fellowship, education and professional development activities. In addition, NDSU has over 300 students groups including academic organizations, cultural organizations, and special interest groups. The website ndsu.orgsync.com lists all recognized campus groups.