

Graduate Handbook  
M.S. in Applied Statistics

1. An admitted student will be assigned an initial advisor for the M.S. program. This advisor is a coursework advisor to help the student get started in the program and advise any coursework for the first one or two semesters. This advisor is not considered to be the research advisor of the student.
2. Students in the M.S. program in Applied Statistics will need to take a total of at least 32 credit hours at the graduate level, as approved. The M.S. program in Applied Statistics requires 15 hours in core courses (unless taken at the undergraduate level). The following are the set of 15 hours of core courses:
  - Stat 661 Applied Regression Models, 3 credits
  - Stat 662 Introduction to Experimental Design, 3 credits
  - Stat 774 Multivariate Methods, 3 credits
  - Stat 767 Probability and Mathematical Statistics I, 3 credits
  - Stat 768 Probability and Mathematical Statistics II, 3 credits
3. Once a student has completed the set of core courses, the student could then register for the comprehensive exam. This exam is given once during the fall semester and once during the spring semester. The comprehensive exam is usually given during the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. Times will be sent out at the beginning of each semester. The exam is given over a two day period. The first part of the exam is on material covered in Stat 767 and Stat 768. The second part of the exam is on material covered in Stat 661, Stat 662, and Stat 774. The student must initially take both parts of the exam during the same semester. The student needs to average 70% or above on the first part of the exam and 70% or above on the second part of the exam in order to pass the comprehensive exam. If a student scores less than 70% on one part and at least a 70% on the other part, the student only needs to retake the part in which they scored less than 70%. If the student did not score at least a 70% on either part of the exam, the student will need to retake both parts of the exam at the same time. A student is given two attempts at passing the comprehensive exam. If the student does not pass the exam in two attempts, they may write a letter, with the help of their advisor, to appeal for a third attempt. A comprehensive exam committee of 3 faculty members would be appointed to decide whether or not to allow the student a third attempt. A student would never be allowed more than 3 attempts, and the third attempt is not guaranteed. Note that a student must keep track of their own notes for these classes, or materials covered in the classes. A student will not have access to the Blackboard site of these classes unless the student is in the class during that semester. Do not assume that notes on Blackboard will always be available!
4. Students in the M.S. program in Applied Statistics will need to conduct research and before the research is started, a student must select a research advisor who is willing to guide them. Generally, this is done before the beginning of the second year in the program (although this could vary). The student may decide to do a research paper or a thesis. This decision should be in conjunction with the research advisor of the student. If a student selects a research paper, the student should register for Stat 797 credits. The student will need to register for at least a total of 3 research credits ( these do not need to be all in the same semester). Only 3 of these credits will be counted towards the plan of study, but a student must maintain continuous registration as stated on the Graduate School website until graduating. If a student selects a thesis, the student should register for at least 6 credits of Stat 798 (these do not have to be all in the same semester). Only 6 of these credits will be counted towards the plan of study, but continuous registration must be maintained.

5. A student must submit a [Plan of Study \(POS\)](#). The POS should be submitted after the research advisor is selected (by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester or the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester). The advisory committee of the student must also be determined before the plan of study is submitted. The advisory committee would include the advisor, one additional faculty member in the Department of Statistics, and one faculty member from outside the Department who can serve as the Graduate School Representative. The plan of study form must be started by the student. The form is found on the Graduate School website. A student should have between 32-33 hours of approved coursework/research on the plan of study. Additional coursework may be taken, but this should not be included on the plan of study for the M.S. degree. Not including the additional hours would allow for the possibility the additional coursework could be counted towards another graduate degree. As stated earlier, only 3 credits should be counted towards Stat 797, or 6 credits counted towards Stat 798 on the POS. The POS should also include the 15 hours in core courses unless previously taken at NDSU as an undergraduate, or upon consent by the advisory committee. The POS would also include 11-15 hours of approved electives.
6. Once the research paper or thesis is written and approved by the research advisor, and a student has passed the comprehensive exam at the M.S. level, the student may schedule their Final Defense. The time of the Final Defense must be approved by all members of the student's advisory committee. [A form to schedule](#) this may be found on the Graduate School website. The Final Defense must be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance of the time that it will occur. Every member of the advisory committee must have a copy of the research paper or thesis at least one week in advance of the Final Defense.
7. After the Final Defense is completed, the student should start the Report of the Final Defense and the [IRB/IACUC/IBC compliance form](#) found on the Graduate School website. If there are changes to the research paper or the thesis as required by the committee, the student should make these changes, and submit the changes to their research advisor or any other committee member requesting to see the changes. Once the changes are approved by the advisory committee, the student should start the [Approval Form](#) found on the Graduate School website. The student can then submit the research paper or thesis to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will work with the student on formatting changes that are required. The student should respond to any changes wanted by the Graduate School. The changes must be made and the final document approved by the Graduate School before the degree is awarded.

Some additional notes:

When writing the research paper or thesis, the student should read the Graduate School website on disquisitions and follow the rules. Formatting will be reviewed by the Graduate School. Any fees that the Graduate School requires must also be paid when the research paper/thesis is submitted or at the time requested by the Graduate School.

Students should pay attention to the dates listed on the Graduate School website. The dates would include filing the intention to graduate, and the dates that the research paper/thesis must be in to the Graduate School in order for graduation to occur that semester. Other dates may be listed as well. The Final Oral can't be scheduled if the student does not have a signed Plan of Study (POS).