

Graduate Faculty and Staff Handbook

2025-2026 Academic Year



Recent Changes to Graduate College Policies and Procedures

The following policy and procedural changes are effective fall semester 2025 unless otherwise noted.

Policy/Procedure	Explanation/Notes
Academic Warning	An academic warning is extended if a student achieves a minimum 3.00 term GPA in the subsequent semester, even if their cumulative GPA remains below 3.00.
Academic Standing and Leave of Absence	Students on academic warning or probation can take a leave of absence from their graduate studies; this will not change their academic standing. Students on academic probation must submit their remediation plan before requesting a leave of absence.
Change to Plan of Study	The Change to Plan of Study form is no longer in use. Advisor's must submit the Substitution/Waive eForm in Campus Connect to make these changes.
Graduate School Holds and Registration	Students with a Conditional Admission Hold or on Academic Warning will now be allowed to register for the subsequent semester prior to current semester grade posting. Conditional admission credit limits still apply.
Intent to Graduate Survey	The survey has been replaced with the Graduation Application in Campus Connection. All student must submit application by the deadline for the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

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Section 1 Graduate School Overview

The College of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies (Graduate College) is home to the Graduate School, the Center for Writers, and cutting-edge graduate interdisciplinary programs (Cellular and Molecular Biology, Environmental and Conservation Sciences, Genomics, Phenomics and Bioinformatics, Materials and Nanotechnology, and Discipline-Based Educational Research), we're here to support every step of your advanced degree.

NDSU Graduate School

The NDSU Graduate School is the central administrative unit responsible for overseeing graduate education, from admission to graduation. It provides policy interpretation, assistance with forms, auditing of completion requirements, and disquisition review.

Key Functions of the Graduate School:

- Processing applications and admissions
- Maintaining student records
- Developing and enforcing graduate policies
- Approving Plans of Study and Supervisory Committees
- Reviewing and approving theses, dissertations, and master's papers
- Processing graduation applications
- Offering professional development opportunities and support services

Academic Support Specialist

Academic Support Specialists are a resource for faculty, staff, and students to answer questions about policy and requirements. Academic Support Specialists can address issues individually, but the Academic Support Team, including the GPS/Grad Hub coordinator can also speak in classes, attend department meetings, and meet with student groups. Your Academic Support Specialist is responsible for monitoring degree progress and completion, processing forms, and enforcing policy.

Center for Writers

The Center for Writers is an invaluable resource for everyone at NDSU, including **students, faculty, and staff**. They offer professional writing assistance that can significantly enhance the quality of written work across the board.

For graduate students, this means help at all stages of their thesis, dissertation, grant proposals, and other academic writing.

For faculty and staff, the Center can assist with a range of professional writing needs. By utilizing the Center, you and your students can focus more on content and research direction, knowing that foundational writing mechanics are being supported.

Graduate Professional Skills Academy

This free resource is specifically designed to equip our graduate students with essential professional competencies that go beyond their academic and research training. The GPS Academy offers workshops, seminars, and valuable resources focused on areas like communication, leadership, project management, career development, and ethical conduct. Participation can significantly enhance their marketability and prepare them for diverse career paths, whether within or outside academia.

Graduate College Fellowships and Awards

The Graduate College offers funding opportunities for students and departments.

	Funding Announcement	Deadline	Funding Notification
Dissertation Fellowships	Fall – May Spring – Nov.	Fall – June Spring – December	Fall – July Spring – December
Recruitment Awards	Early August	NA	2-3 weeks after submission
Student Travel Funding	Available starting July 1 each year	Prior to travel	7 business days after submission
Teaching and Research Awards	Each academic college facilitates the nomination and awarding process.		

Graduate College Contacts

The Graduate College staff is here to support faculty, staff and students navigate graduate policies and processes from applying for admission to degree completion.

[Graduate School Staff Directory](#) is available on the [Graduate School website](#).

The [Graduate School website](#) is an essential resource for forms, deadlines, and guidelines for all aspects of your graduate education.

Section 2 Role of the Department

Departments are the primary contact for graduate students and provide guidance and support throughout their studies. Departments have responsibilities in keeping curriculum up to date, advising, recruitment and retention, and career development. The Graduate College is a key partner in these endeavors and can collaborate with faculty, staff, and students to facilitate the success of graduate programs at NDSU.

Graduate Program Coordinator

Each graduate program must identify a graduate program coordinator (GPC). This person is entrusted by an academic department to oversee the operations and procedures of the graduate programs of that department. After an advisor, the graduate program coordinator is the next person that a graduate student should contact to resolve questions and to clarify processes related to the graduate programs of that department.

Student Recruitment

The Graduate School supports departments with general recruitment activities such as participating in graduate school fairs. There is a [Recruitment Toolkit](#) available to departments.

Here are some tips to help with graduate recruitment.

- Keep your program pages up to date as prospective students reference program pages more than our curriculum pages in the University Catalog
- Follow up with potential students when they email or call
- Collaborate with the Graduate School for recruitment assistance. The Graduate School also offers funding awards to support program recruitment efforts.
- Admit students in a timely manner.

Student Orientation

Incoming students may be new to graduate school, even new to NDSU and the Fargo-Moorhead area. The Graduate School offers a welcome event in the fall and spring semesters. If possible, a program (or college-level) orientation may give incoming students a sense of support and community at NDSU.

Program Handbook

Departments should provide students with a program handbook that includes program-specific policies and requirements for degree completion. The handbook should include a

link to the University Catalog to reference the most current university and Graduate College policies.

The handbook should be posted, accessible to students, and updated at least once a year. Any curriculum updates must be made in CourseLeaf, approved by through the governance process, and should be added to the handbook after approval.

Advisor

Every student must have an advisor. Students should meet regularly with their advisor to discuss courses to take, degree progress, and research. The student-advisor relationship must be a mutually acceptable relationship.

If the advisor leaves NDSU, they may continue to serve as the advisor for one calendar year after their departure. After one calendar year, the student must find a new advisor or consult with the graduate program coordinator to find an appropriate solution.

Student Research Compliance

Programs and advisors are responsible for ensuring students are in compliance with research protocols (e.g., IRB, IACUC, IBC). Any research conducted by a student who is not in compliance cannot be used in the student's disquisition.

Section 3 Admission

We appreciate your dedication to recruiting and admitting exceptional graduate students to North Dakota State University. The information in this section will help you as you engage with prospective students.

Application Materials

All degree seeking applicants must submit the following to complete the application process.

- Online Application to the Graduate School
- Statement of purpose
- Resume or C.V.
- \$35 application fee
 - The application fee is waived for McNair Scholars, Native American applicants, and US Military and Veterans
- Original official transcripts are required to be sent from each institution attended, whether or not a degree was earned, and even if courses were transferred to another university.

- If a student has submitted a transcript prior to completing their undergraduate or graduate degree, an updated transcript with the posted degree must be received by the Graduate School before the student will be allowed to register.
- Current NDSU students are not required to submit their final transcript as the Graduate School can verify the posted degree in Campus Connection.
- [English proficiency language scores](#) (if applicable)
- Recommendations (if required by the program)
- Other materials/test scores (if required by the program)

Current graduate students adding a graduate certificate may submit the [Request to Add a Certificate to a Graduate Degree](#) form and \$35 application fee to apply.

Admission Status

Full Standing

Students who meet all admission requirements may be admitted in full standing.

Conditional Standing

Students who do not meet all admission requirements, or have prerequisite course deficiencies, but show potential for successfully graduate student may be admitted in Conditional Standing.

At the time of admission, the program must specify conditions to be satisfied to move to Full Standing. Students with an undergraduate cumulative GPA below 3.0 at the time of admission will be admitted in Conditional Standing by the Graduate School

- Students admitted in Conditional Standing are automatically placed on academic warning until the conditions of admission are met.
- Students admitted conditionally to a graduate program cannot earn more than 12 graduate credits prior to completing the conditions of admission.
- Students admitted to an accelerated degree program may earn up to one-half of their required program's graduate credits while in conditional standing.
 - There may be financial aid implications for students who earn more than 15 graduate credits while conditionally admitted.

Application Decisions

Programs are responsible for entering admission decisions in a timely manner, ideally within 4-6 weeks after the application deadline.

Fall Entry	
June 1	Last day to admit international students
July 1	Last day to admit funded domestic students
September (census date)	Last day to admit non-funded domestic students
Spring Entry	
November 1	Last day to admit international students
November 15	Last day to admit funded domestic students
February (census date)	Last day to admit non-funded domestic students
Summer Entry - Only programs with an official summer start date may admit international students for summer entry	
April 1	Last day to admit international students
April 15	Last day to admit funded domestic students

Section 4 Enrollment and Academic Standing

Graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment, fall and spring semesters, until all degree requirements have been completed. For students completing a disquisition (master's paper, master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, that includes the successful completion of the Graduation School's disquisition format review.

- You must be officially admitted and fully enrolled to attend classes.
- If you hold a [graduate assistantship](#), you'll need to register for a minimum of six graduate credits each semester to maintain it.
- If you plan a preliminary or final defense during the summer, summer registration is required.
- International graduate students must also comply with specific visa regulations.

Holds

Students may encounter holds that prevent course registration. Most common registration holds are:

- Conditional Admission (CNA): Student has not completed the conditions of admission. Students should refer to their admission letter for details.
- Financial Holds: Unpaid tuition or fees. Contact One Stop
- Financial Obligation Agreement (FOA): Each semester a student must accept the FOA to confirm their financial responsibility to the university.
- Graduate School Hold (GSH): More information is needed, generally final transcripts or degree certificates from your previous institution(s), before you can register.
- Graduate Academic Standing (GAS): Student is on academic warning or probation.

Credit/Course Load

- Full-time status: 9 or more graduate credits per semester.
- Half-time status: 5 graduate credits per semester.
- Graduate Assistants: 6 credits minimum each fall and spring semester. Departments may require a higher minimum
- International students must follow visa compliance guidelines.

Student registration is capped at 15 credits each semester. To request more than the 15-credit limit, student must submit the [Over 15 Credit Petition](#) form.

Leave of Absence and Reactivation

With the approval of the advisor and graduate program coordinator, students may request a [Leave of Absence](#) (LOA) to pause graduate studies for up to four fall/spring semesters .

A leave must be requested before the fourth week of the semester.

A student may take multiple leaves, but the degree completion deadlines are not extended.

Students must submit a [Reactivation](#) form to return to their program.

- Students who do not submit the LOA request must register for one credit for each fall and spring semester they were inactive.

Students who are away for more than two years must reapply to the Graduate School.

Family and Medical Accommodation Policy

This policy helps students dealing with serious health issues, a new child, or a seriously ill family member. You can request:

Modified Assistantship Duties: The agreement allows for an adjustment to assistantship tasks and goals for a limited period without a reduction in stipend or workload.

- Eligible students get a Parental Accommodation period of up to six weeks after the birth or adoption of a child under age 6.
- Modified duty agreements must end within 12 months.

Extensions: Students may also request an extension to complete their preliminary examination, final defense and/or their disquisition format review process.

- Extensions are granted case-by-case, with a maximum of two calendar years.
- A Leave of Absence may be required in addition to an extension.
- The full policy is available in the Graduate Catalog.

898 Continuation Credit

The 898-continuation credit is a fee-based option for students who need to enroll in graduate credits when other courses don't apply. This includes students who have:

- Completed all degree requirements except for their disquisition.
- Returned to graduate studies after an absence without filing for a Leave of Absence.
- International Students must work with the International Student and Study Abroad Services office to confirm your eligibility.

Students registered for 898 credits only will have access to

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| • Email | • IT Help Desk |
| • NDSU web resources | • Career Center |
| • Library | |

But not access to

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| • Wellness Center | • Student Health Services |
| • Athletic events | |

Academic Standing

To remain in good academic standing, graduate students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

A student whose cumulative GPA falls below the minimum requirement, they are placed on **academic warning**.

Students enter the grading period on academic warning and achieve a minimum semester GPA of 3.00, demonstrating adequate progress, but their cumulative GPA remains below the 3.00 minimum they are placed on **continued academic warning**.

If student's cumulative GPA continues to be below 3.0, they are placed on **academic probation**. Students on academic probation may not continue their studies until an acceptable remediation plan is filed and approved by the Graduate School.

Section 5 Graduate Faculty and Graduate Council

Graduate and Affiliate Graduate Faculty

All tenured or tenure-track Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, or Professors in an academic unit or program area at NDSU are considered full-status members of the NDSU Graduate Faculty.

A full-status member of the Graduate Faculty may teach graduate courses, chair supervisory committees, vote at graduate faculty meetings and serve as a member of supervisory committees, graduate student appeals committees, the Graduate Council or in any other capacity as required.

Affiliate Graduate Faculty

Other qualified individuals who are not full Graduate Faculty members may contribute to the scholarship and professional development of our graduate students. Departments and programs may nominate these individuals for Affiliate Graduate Faculty status. Nominations are reviewed by a Graduate Council committee and voted on by the full Council membership.

The nomination process, a description of the AGF levels and eligibility requirements and term information are posted in the [University Catalog](#).

The Graduate Council is a group of graduate faculty and graduate students responsible for formulating, reviewing, disseminating, and monitoring the implementation of policies and procedures concerning graduate education at North Dakota State University.

Graduate Council

The Graduate Council is representative body responsible for formulating, reviewing, disseminating, and monitoring the implementation of policies and procedures concerning graduate education at North Dakota State University.

The Graduate Council is composed graduate faculty representatives from each academic college, including College of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies, additional at-large members and two graduate students.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to contact Graduate Council member with concerns or ideas regarding Graduate School policies and procedures.

Current Graduate Council membership may be found on the [Graduate School website](#).

Section 6 Graduate Degree

Plan of Study and Supervisory Committee Form

By the end of their second semester of study, students should submit the Plan of Study and Supervisory Committee form.

The Plan of Study is a crucial agreement between the student, academic program, and the Graduate College. It details all the courses required complete to earn a graduate degree. This may include:

- Qualifying transfer credits.
- Up to 10 credits earned as a non-degree NDSU graduate student that apply toward your degree.

The following programs are **not required to submit a Plan of Study form**. The curriculum required for these programs is built in Campus Connection and programs may be monitored by using the Advisement Report tool.

Accountancy	Family and Consumer Science Education
Agricultural Education	Exercise Science and Nutrition
Architecture	Landscape Architecture
Athletic Training	Leadership in Physical Education and Sport Coaching
Business Administration	Music (D.M.A.)
Business Analytics	Nursing (D.N.P.)
Community Planning and Resilience	Public Health
Construction Management	Public Policy
Counselor Education	Sport Management
Education	Transportation and Logistics (M.S.C.M.)
Educational Leadership	Transportation and Logistics (M.S.C.M.)
Extension Education	

Any deviations from the posted curriculum must be approved and submitted by the advisor with the Request to Waive or Substitute Courses eForm in Campus Connection. Currently students do not have access to this form.

Supervisory Committee

In addition to an advisor, graduate students completing a disquisition must also have a supervisory committee, chosen by the student and advisor. This committee must meet the Graduate School membership requirements.

- Supervisory Committee membership is documented on the Plan of Study and Supervisory Committee form.
 - Students in programs that do not require the Plan of Study and Supervisory Committee form will document their committee by using the “Form Supervisory Committee” form.
- Any changes to the committee can be made with the Change to Supervisory Committee form.

	Plan A & B	Plan C	Doctoral
Number of Required Members	3	1	4
Advisor - full or affiliate graduate faculty at appropriate level	✓	✓	✓
Member 2 or Co-Advisor - full or affiliate graduate faculty member	✓	NA	✓
Member 3 - full or affiliate graduate faculty or non-faculty expert)	✓	NA	✓
Graduate School Representative (GSR) - full graduate faculty member	NA	NA	✓

Graduate School Representative (GSR) (doctoral students only)

The Graduate School Representative (GSR) acts as a neutral party on the supervisory committee, ensuring Graduate School policies and procedures are followed. The GSR doesn't need to evaluate the content of the research and disquisition.

Detailed GSR eligibility requirements are listed in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Non-Faculty Experts Committee

A committee member who isn't a full or affiliate graduate faculty member, must be approved by the Graduate School at the time Plan of Study and Supervisory Committee, Form Supervisory Committee, or Change to Supervisory Committee form is submitted. The following items must be attached to the form.

- A letter of support from the department chair (for interdisciplinary programs, the program coordinator) explaining how this expert will contribute to your committee.
- Their curriculum vitae (CV).

Oral Preliminary Examination and Final Defense

Notification Forms

Students must initiate the appropriate notification form (see below) so it is received, with all required signatures, a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the scheduled date.

- Forms received less than seven calendar days prior to the examination date will not be processed.
- A new a new date must be scheduled, and a new notification form filed by the seven-calendar day deadline.

Notification of Oral Preliminary Examination (Ph.D.)

Notification of Comprehensive Examination (D.M.A.)

Notification of Final Defense (Plan A, Plan B, Ph.D., and D.N.P)

Notification of Final Lecture Recital (D.M.A.)

Report Forms

Students must initiate the appropriate notification form (see below) so it is received, with all required signatures, a minimum of 14 days after to the scheduled date.

The report forms

- document whether or not a student passes the examination/defense/lecture recital
- note any changes a student needs to make to preliminary examination product or their disquisition
- should not be held until changes are made to the disquisition

Report of Preliminary Examination (Ph.D.)

Report of Comprehensive Examination (D.M.A.)

Report of Final Defense (Plan A, B, Ph.D., and D.N.P.)

Report of Final Lecture Recital (D.M.A.)

After the Final Defense

In addition to the report form, students must submit the follow items to the Graduate School

- IRB/IACUC/IBC Compliance Notification, even if their research does not involve human subjects, live vertebrate animals, or biohazards.
 - Any approval documentation must be attached to the form when submitted. If the student was not a member of the research team at the time the protocol was approved, the original letter of approval AND the letter approving the student's addition to the research team must be included.
 - Do not attach the research protocol, only approval letters.
 - The Graduate School is not responsible for obtaining supporting documents or determining if approval is required for the research conducted for the disquisition.
- Signed Approval Page
 - This form is different than the Report of Final Defense/Lecture Recital.
 - Committee members can wait to sign the form until the student has made the requested changes.
- \$175 processing fee.

All items must be received (with all required signatures) by the Graduate School prior to submitting the disquisition for format review. If the fee and/or forms are not received by the submission deadline, the official submission date is considered to be the date on which the last item is received.

Disquisition Format Review Process

All disquisitions must be submitted for the disquisition format review process and publication. As with any publication, NDSU has format requirements for publishing disquisitions in the institutional repository. Thus, each disquisition must be reviewed to ensure the format requirements have been met.

For Plan A, Plan B, and doctoral students, the format review process is the last step towards degree completion. Disquisition formatting guidelines and templates are available on the Center for Writers website under [Disquisitions](#).

The student's degree will post at the end of the semester in which a student successfully completes the format review process and all other degree requirements. If a disquisition is approved after the last day of a semester, the student's degree will post for the subsequent semester and the student must register for that semester (fall and spring).

Final Steps

Before a graduate degree can be posted, the following items must be completed.

All students

- All grades must be posted in Campus Connection
 - A degree cannot post if there are outstanding grades.
 - Final clearance of academic requirements will be made when current term grades have been submitted.
- All graduation audit discrepancies must be cleared
- Student's cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
 - Any grade changes submitted after the grade deadline will delay the student's graduation term to the follow semester.

Plan C Master's Students

By the last day of the semester in which all coursework has been completed, the student must submit the Graduation Application. A \$25 processing fee will be applied to the student's account in Campus Connection.

Section 7 Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Waivers

Graduate Assistantships

To be eligible for an assistantship a student must

- Be degree seeking
- Be in good academic standing
- Enroll in a minimum of 6 credits during the fall and spring semester
 - This policy does not apply if the student is in their final semester and has fewer than 6 credits remaining to complete their program of study.
 - International students who have completed coursework and have only research remaining must follow this policy, even if 6 credits is not necessary to maintain visa status.
 - Departments may require students to register for more than 6 credits to hold an assistantship
 - Students seeking a summer assistantship must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credits either during the spring prior or fall term immediately after the summer fellowship; summer enrollment is not required for a summer term assistantship.
- Complete the graduate assistant onboarding process
- Read and adhere to the graduate assistantship policy
- Complete training requirements

Onboarding

The steps below must be completed to ensure a student may start their assistantship and receive their stipend.

Graduate Assistant Contract

Initiated by the hiring department and signed by the graduate assistant

On-boarding email will be sent to NDSU email account

Background check (if required)

The company Sterling Solutions / First Advantage will send a background check request, with instructions, via email.

I-9 Submission for new hires

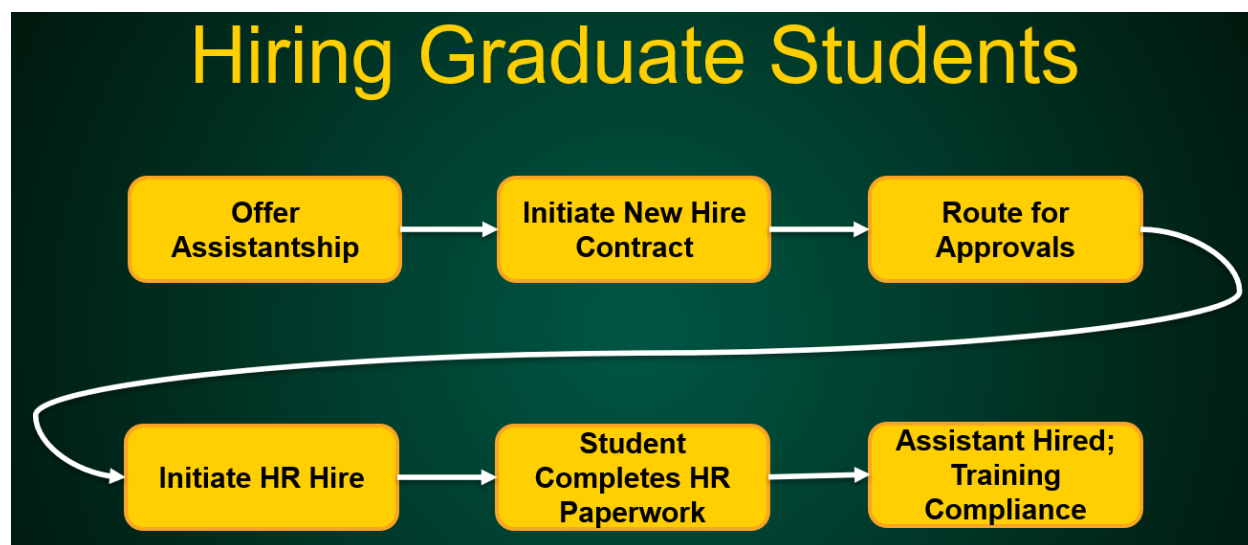
Student will receive an email with a link to complete Section 1 of the I-9 online form.

To complete Section 2, the student must present original identification documents to HR/Payroll, or approved department representative.

Section 1 and Section 2 must be completed before a hire is approved. Student must not start their assistantship work until both sections of the I-9 form are completed.

Complete required trainings

Students must complete the required trainings list on their assistantship contract. The department will assign trainings in Vector Solutions.



Tuition Waivers

Tuition waivers may be offered to students receiving a qualifying graduate assistantship or fellowship and are governed by the specific tuition waiver policies of the granting academic college.

Qualifying graduate assistantships must be at least 10 hours a week and may not exceed 20 hours a week and must total 160 hours during spring and fall semesters.

- Students who, for any reason, do not complete a minimum of 160 hours in a given semester will not be eligible for that semester's waiver and will be billed for the tuition.

- Partial tuition waivers are not given if the student works fewer than the minimum hours (160) required per semester.

Tuition waivers cover base tuition for NDSU graduate credits only. Students are responsible for differential tuition, student fees, and tuition for non-graduate level credits taken, Cooperative Education credits and continuing enrollment credits.

The tuition waiver may be reduced by other financial awards directed specifically to pay tuition.

Students receiving a graduate tuition waiver may not receive other NDSU tuition waivers. Students eligible for multiple tuition waivers will receive the waiver resulting in the most tuition being waived.

Eligibility for a summer tuition waiver is dependent upon the specific tuition waiver policies of the granting college which may include holding a summer assistantship or having received a tuition waiver for the preceding or following academic term (spring or fall semester).

Tuition waivers are applied to student accounts following completion of required training.

NDSU

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