

# Graduate Program Guidelines

## Admission to Graduate Programs

Dakota State University and its graduate programs seek highly motivated individuals with educational and professional credentials that will enable them to be successful graduate students. Minimum admission requirements are established by the DSU Graduate Council. Degree-specific requirements are established by the college offering the graduate program and reviewed and approved by DSU Graduate Council. Additional restrictions and requirements may be based on Board of Regents policy.

DSU bases admission to its graduate programs upon the academic qualifications of applicants. The underlying principle for acceptance is a demonstration of ability to successfully complete the desired program. Admission to all degree programs is competitive and subject to the resource constraints necessary to provide quality graduate education within each program.

### Requirements for Full Admission into a Graduate Program Include:

1. Completion of a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university; and
2. A minimum undergraduate grade point average of 2.7 or a minimum graduate grade point average of 3.0.; and
3. Demonstration of sufficient proficiency in written and oral English as noted below (applies to international applicants only).

Individual programs may have additional admission requirements. Those requirements are listed at on the Graduate Office website.

### Additional Admission Requirements for International/Foreign Students Admission

The Department of State and SEVP (the Student and Exchange Visitor Program) requires all international applicants to demonstrate sufficient English proficiency. Applicants whose native language is not English, and who have not obtained an undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited American college or university must demonstrate English proficiency by one of the following:

- TOEFL iBT: 76
- TOEFL PBT: 550
- IELTS: 6.0
- PTE Academic: 53
- Completion of ELS Level 112

- GTEC CBT: 1200

International students, except for those entitled to establish a legal domicile in South Dakota, are required to purchase the South Dakota Board of Regents' endorsed student health insurance plan for themselves. (See BOR Policy 3:14). F-1 visa holders are required to have health insurance during their entire stay in the United States, as well.

### **Admission Status**

Unconditional admission, also referred to as 'regular' or 'full' admission, is granted to applicants who fully meet the minimum admission standards listed above and the program-specific admission requirements listed on the Graduate Programs website. Applicants who do not fully satisfy all admission criteria, (e.g. grades, test scores, demonstrated basic knowledge in the discipline, or other credentials) but do show sufficient promise may be conditionally admitted to a graduate degree program. Conditional admission permits the applicant to enter the program on a trial or probationary basis. An I-20 cannot be issued for any student conditionally admitted. A student admitted on a conditional basis must:

- Satisfy any condition serving as the basis for conditional admission within the allotted time period as required by their program and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research; and/or
- Demonstrate potential for success by achieving at least a grade of "B" in each course taken during the first 9 credit hours of enrollment.

Students who do not meet these criteria will be suspended. The college offering the degree program, in consultation with the Program Coordinators and Office of Graduate Studies and Research, is responsible for monitoring and tracking the student's status.

### **Special Student - Post-Graduate Status**

The term 'graduate student' applies only to those students who meet minimum standards for admission and/or have been recommended for admission either unconditionally or conditionally. A student who holds a baccalaureate-level degree who wishes to take course work but who does not want to enter (or has not been admitted to) a graduate degree program, must seek permission from the Program Coordinator offering that course. These students will be designated as holding special student-post-graduate status.

Any student holding a baccalaureate or professional degree from a regionally accredited institution may register for individual courses at the graduate level without making formal application to a degree program. An applicant seeking special student status is not required to furnish transcripts or recommendations. There is no minimum GPA requirement. To apply for admission to specific courses, the student must complete the Special Student Post-Graduate online application and meet prerequisite conditions for the specific course(s), as determined by the course instructor.

If a special student decides to work toward a graduate degree, he/she must apply for admission into the degree program. A maximum of nine (9) graduate credit hours earned while enrolled as a special student may be applied to a graduate degree program. Students who have been denied admission to a degree program are permitted to apply for special student status and may enroll for individual courses. Special students are not eligible for financial aid.

## **Readmission**

Graduate students who withdraw from the university or are suspended from their program must apply for readmission through the Office of Graduate Studies and Research at least one month prior to registration for that semester. Readmission forms are available in the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. If any graduate work was undertaken at another institution during the intervening time, those transcripts must be furnished to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. The degree program's Graduate Admissions Committee will review the readmission request and make a recommendation for readmission. The student's advisor and/or advisory committee, in consultation with the program coordinator, may require the student to file a new Plan of Study. Note that the program description and curriculum in effect at the time of readmission applies to the student's academic program plans.

## **Application Procedures**

The Office of Graduate Studies and Research is responsible for processing all applications. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the application file is complete. The following documents are required:

1. Completed Online Graduate Application, including statement of educational goals, submitted by the applicant.
2. Non-refundable application fee.
3. One official transcript (by direct mail from the granting institution or in sealed envelope) from all post-secondary institutions attended other than South Dakota Board of Regents institutions. Applicants who have not yet completed an undergraduate degree should send a current transcript and arrange to have another transcript sent directly to the DSU Office of Graduate Studies and Research after a degree has been awarded.
4. Applicants who have completed a degree outside the US are encouraged to provide a professional transcript evaluation from an evaluation service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services. Priority review will be given to those students that provide professional transcripts. Students who do not provide professionally evaluated transcripts may be asked by the graduate admission committee to provide an evaluated transcript. If an evaluation is required, then this replaces the requirement for official transcripts. Submitted transcripts become the property of Dakota State University and will not be

- returned. Examples of acceptable services include but are not limited to, Educational Perspectives and World Education Services (WES). Course-by-course evaluations must include transcript authentically, GPA calculation, and US degree equivalency and be sent directly from the evaluation service.
5. Three letters of recommendation, as directed in the online application instructions.
  6. A completed Assistantship Form must be submitted if an assistantship is being requested. See Graduate Assistantship policy 05-20-00 for more information.
  7. If required by the individual graduate program, scores from a standardized graduate admission test should be sent directly to the DSU Office of Graduate Studies and Research.
  8. Other documentation as required by individual graduate programs.

The application form, other supporting documentation and the application fee are submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research through the online application.

In addition to those items listed above, applicants presenting foreign educational credentials must also submit/provide proof of:

- If applying for a master's degree program:
  - a university degree that is recognized as equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree prior to beginning graduate study.
- If applying for a doctoral degree program:
  - a university degree that is recognized as equivalent to a U.S. master's degree prior to beginning graduate study.
- Proof of English proficiency.
- Certificate of Financial Responsibility and official bank statement showing minimum required US dollar amount.

The Office of Graduate Studies and Research will review application packages to ensure applications are complete and accurate and apprise the applicant of deficiencies in the application packet. Once complete, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research will forward completed applications to the respective program admission committee for review.

After review by the program admissions committee, the graduate student applications will be designated as:

- **Full Admission.** These are applications meeting minimum graduate program requirements.
- **Conditional Admission.** These are applications that do not fully satisfy all admission criteria. Students not meeting all program admission criteria may be admitted conditionally upon recommendation by the program admission

committee and approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Timelines and conditions for reaching full admission are stipulated by program coordinators.

- **Deny Admission.** These are applications that do not satisfy all admission criteria, or after a complete review and assessment of the application, are not competitive with other applications.
- **Non-degree/Special Student.** These are applications that satisfy all admission criteria for non-degree or special student status (i.e., Fast-Track 4+1, certificate students).

The Dean of Graduate Studies and Research will act on the applications based on the recommendations of the program admission committee. The Office of Graduate Studies and Research will notify applicants, the respective program coordinator, and the student's academic advisor (if any) relative to the applicant's admission status.

Upon admission, and to be able to register for courses, newly admitted students are required to provide proof of immunity for Measles (Rubeola), mumps, and Rubella. Applicants born before January 1, 1957, are exempt from this requirement. International students are also required to provide proof of medical insurance.

## **Registration of Graduate Studies**

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in their degree programs by registering for at least one course each academic term (summer, fall, and spring) until all requirements for the degree are completed. Students who are unable to take a course in a particular academic term must seek approval from their academic advisor. Student will be marked as program sustaining for that semester. Program sustaining status carries zero credit and requires no tuition or fee payment. Students who do not maintain continuous registration will be suspended from the program following normal suspension procedures.

The academic school terms are summer, fall, and spring. The start and end dates for each semester are published in the university schedule. Each semester, the registrar's office announces deadline dates and procedures for student registration (See BOR Policy 2.6 Academic Calendars for a discussion of the registration dates). Graduate students, in consultation with their academic advisor or advising committee, are responsible for selecting courses that meet the requirements of their Plan of Study. Graduate students should consult regularly with their advisors to discuss course selection.

### **Changing Class Schedule - Drop/Add**

(See Withdrawal of Graduate Students).

### **Registering for Independent Study**

Independent Study credits are permitted at the graduate level with the approval of the instructor, the graduate program's coordinator, College Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and only under the following (or similar) conditions: the student has been unable to take the course when it was offered, and to wait to take it the next time it is offered would cause an undo delay in the student's graduation or create problems with course sequencing. Copies of the syllabus must be maintained in the college office, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research and the Vice President for Academic Affairs' office.

### **Registering to audit a course**

Auditing university courses without credit is permitted. Students interested only for personal gain and not interested in university credit may want to consider the "audit" option. Course prerequisite requirements are the same for audit as for credit. Tuition and fees are the same for audit or regular credit options. Students wishing to audit a course must do so by noting their intention on their registration form. Auditors will not receive university credit. The notation "AU" indicates the course was audited. This notation is made by the Registrar's staff directly to the class roster for the convenience of the member. No other grades of "AU" may be issued.

### **Undergraduate Registration in Graduate Courses**

Undergraduate students whose undergraduate record is such that they can qualify for admission to the graduate program, may (in their final year) register for a limited number of graduate courses for graduate credit. Graduate-level courses are open to undergraduates only by exception. Registration requires the permission of the dean of the college in which the course is offered and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Such permission does not constitute admission to the graduate program. (See BOR Policy 2:8 Levels and Numbering of Courses.)

### **Fast Track (4+1) Participation**

Students wishing to enroll in a Fast Track (4+1) program must complete a Fast Track (4+1) application form.

### **Graduate Registration in Undergraduate Courses**

Graduate students who wish to take an undergraduate course may do so. However, no undergraduate course will meet a graduate requirement. Total undergraduate and graduate hours must not exceed the maximum hours permitted for the graduate course load. The reduced tuition rate permitted for graduate assistants also applies to undergraduate courses.

### **Plan of Study**

A Plan of Study is an agreement between the student and the University formally

specifying all course work required to complete the graduate degree. It will indicate the order in which the courses will be taken and the method by which credit will be sought (e.g., transfer, challenge). It will detail such things as thesis or non-thesis track, specialization to be pursued, and electives.

After being officially admitted to their degree program, students should communicate with their advisors to initiate the planning process to develop a Plan of Study. Advisors will work with their advisees during that semester to ensure that every student prepares a Plan of Study.

Plans of Study must comply with the catalog current at the time students enter their degree programs. They must show all graduate work the student plans to pursue, including courses to be transferred, the designated specialization (if required or planned) and anticipated graduation date. Students' advisors must approve the completed document. The official, complete Plan of Study must be submitted to their advisor and the Office of Graduate Studies and Research prior to the end of their first semester. Originals are forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research and become part of the students' permanent files. Students who do not complete their Plan of Study may be restricted from future registrations. The program coordinator, in consultation with the student's advisor, may extend this deadline.

The graduate advisors bear final responsibility for monitoring the progress of graduate students through their graduate programs. The students bear final responsibility of following their Plan of Study.

Approved Plans of Study can be amended at any time. Students proposing changes must keep their advisors informed in writing of modifications. Advisors will review and approve the changes to ensure that the students continue to make satisfactory progress toward completion. After approval, the update to the Plan of Study will become part of the student's permanent file.

## **Satisfactory Progress**

Students admitted to a graduate program must make satisfactory progress each academic year toward completion of the graduate degree being sought and must remain in good academic standing. All degree requirements must be completed within a period of five (5) years for master degree programs and seven (7) years for doctoral programs.

Requirements for satisfactory progress leading to successful completion of the master's and doctoral degree programs include:

- Continuous enrollment in graduate courses included in their Plan of Study. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for at least one course per academic term, or if that is not possible, registering for a program sustaining credit.
- Satisfactory completion of courses as required for the chosen degree program. (See BOR Policy 02:10-10)

Requirements for good academic standing include:

- A 3.0 grade point average in graduate courses.
- No more than 6 credit hours with "C" grades.
- No grades lower than a "C".

The graduate program coordinator and academic advisors will review a report of probation, suspension and incomplete grades each semester.

## **Probation and suspension**

All graduate students are expected to maintain a cumulative graduate level grade point average of 3.0 ("B" average) throughout their graduate program. Failure to maintain the "B" average places the student on academic probation. Students on academic probation may register for an additional 9 credit hours of coursework and must raise their cumulative graduate level GPA to a 3.0 ("B" average) after completion of the 9 credits.

If this is not accomplished, the student will be suspended from the program. A student who receives more than 6 credits of "C" or any grade lower than a "C" is automatically suspended from the program.

A grievance procedure has been established for students wishing to contest probation or suspension. The Graduate Council will hear all grievances, following the procedure established.

If suspended, the student may apply for readmission to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research after two semesters (summer is considered a semester term). The student must submit a formal request for readmission, along with a supporting statement of explanation with an adequate reason for readmission. Requests shall be acted upon according to the established procedure for application to the program.

## **Graduate Enrollment Status and Course Load**

Academic school terms are summer, fall and spring; inclusive dates are published in the University class schedule.

Graduate student enrollment status is defined as:

- Full-time enrollment for graduate students is at 9 credits hours per academic term.
- Half-time enrollment is 5 credit hours per academic term.

The maximum registration for graduate students is 12 credit hours per academic term (summer, fall, and spring). Overload enrollment is more than 12 credits. To be eligible for overload enrollment, a student must have the approval of their academic advisor, the graduate program's coordinator and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.



International students must be enrolled as full-time students to meet United States Customs and Immigration (USCIS) guidelines. Exceptions may be granted as stipulated in the USCIS guidelines and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

A graduate assistant's student status is determined by both their academic course load and by their graduate assistantship workload

Students wishing to enroll in additional course work beyond their normal course load must consult with their academic advisor and submit a written request to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. Upon approval by their academic advisor the graduate program's coordinator and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, the Office will notify the student with the status of their request.

## **Graduate Assistantship**

Each semester, DSU offers a limited number of assistantships to qualified graduate students. Assistantships are, first and foremost, an educational tool that provides graduate students with the opportunities to apply some of the skills and knowledge they have acquired. Much like an apprentice, under the supervision of experts, students undertake activities that complement their educational experiences. Usually the work done for the university will relate to the degree being sought. Within this educational purpose, assistantships are used to meet a variety of needs: as a source of financial aid, to recruit highly qualified prospective students, and/or to provide much needed assistance for faculty and administrators.

### **Categories of Assistantships at DSU:**

Graduate assistants are paid to teach, support instruction, conduct research, and/or perform administrative tasks for the university. Three categories of assistantships exist: Graduate Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Research Assistantships, and Graduate

Administrative Assistantships.

1. Graduate Teaching Assistantships. Three types of teaching assistantships are available:

- Classroom Instructors are responsible for instructional delivery and are the teacher of record for the course.
- Instructional and/or Laboratory Support personnel provide instructional support to an instructor or lead instructor. They are generally responsible for a variety of instructional support duties, such as proctoring exams, preparing course materials, and/or setting up labs. They support, rather than replace, the instructor and are not the teacher of record for the course.
- Grading or Other Paperwork Support personnel provide only grading and paperwork support for an instructor. They are not responsible for any other instructional support or teaching activities.

2. Graduate Research Assistantships. Supervised by research faculty, with their main focus to assist in the research process. are not responsible for any instructional support or teaching activities.

3. Graduate Administrative Assistantships. Work with department heads, deans, directors or other administrators to perform administrative and/or technical tasks/projects. They are not responsible for any instructional support, teaching, or research activities.

To apply for a graduate assistantship, applicants must complete the assistantship form included in the application packet. The Graduate Dean in consultation with the college deans and Graduate Program Coordinators make assistantship decisions. Appointments may be for any duration up to 12 months. Renewal is not automatic; rather it depends upon the academic performance of the student, the quality of work performed, and the needs of the University. Faculty supervisors are responsible for monitoring the graduate assistant's performance and work hours. Graduate assistants are expected to report for work during the academic semester and during academic breaks as required by university employment regulations.

### **Minimum Requirements for Graduate Assistants**

1. Graduate Assistants must be regularly admitted graduate students in good academic standing in their degree program.
2. International students must have a student (F-1) visa and valid social security number.
3. Graduate Assistants must maintain active status and be registered for the academic course load appropriate for the level of their appointment. (See the discussion below on appointment levels and course load requirements.)
4. Graduate students with other full-time employment will not be considered for graduate assistantships. Exceptions may be granted in cases of unusual economic necessity or other extraordinary circumstances.
5. Graduate Assistants must maintain a program GPA of 3.25 to be eligible for a continuation of their graduate assistantship. Graduate assistants who have been denied renewal may appeal the decision following the established appeal procedure.

### **Graduate Assistantships and Student Status**

Student status (i.e., full- or part-time) is generally determined by the number of credit hours in which the student is enrolled, and it is calculated on a semester-by-semester basis. However, a graduate assistant's student status is determined by both their academic course load and by their assistantship workload. (See the discussion below on appointment levels and course load requirements.) This combination of academic course load and assistantship workload is used to determine federal loan deferments and other federal financial aid issues. The Graduate Programs Office will calculate and record the graduate assistant's student status, will monitor course and workloads, and will notify other administrative offices of this status, as appropriate.

## **Appointment Levels and Workload**

The graduate assistant's workload will be based on an average number of hours of work per week, using a 40-hour week as a base. However, this may vary slightly, depending on assignment.

- One-quarter time appointment = minimum of 10 hours/week
- One-half time appointment = minimum of 20 hours/week

These workload guidelines apply to all types of graduate assistantships: Graduate Teaching Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, and Graduate Administrative Assistants.

Graduate Assistants who receive one-half time appointments are ineligible for other campus employment. Graduate Assistants who receive one-quarter time appointments may work on an hourly basis for another campus department with the knowledge and approval of the dean of the college providing their assistantship.

## **Maximum Course Load for Graduate Assistants**

All courses in the graduate assistant's course schedule taken for credit are counted as part of their course load and have an impact on the level of assistantship / workload that can be assigned. Additional limitations are placed on graduate students who are awarded teaching assistantships. Graduate assistants who wish to enroll in course loads that exceed the limits described below must secure the permission of their advisor and their program coordinator.

## **Teaching Assistants**

Graduate Assistants with teaching assignments shall use the following formula to determine their maximum course enrollments each semester:

Teaching credits + course credits < 12 credit hours.

## **Graduate Research Assistants and Graduate Administrative Assistants**

Generally, only full-time graduate students (students enrolled in at least 9 credit hours) are eligible for one-quarter and one-half time research and administrative assistantships. However, the full-time equivalency requirement may be waived by the Program Committee if deemed warranted. Graduate assistants with one quarter time appointments may take up to 12 credit hours per semester during the fall and spring semesters and up to 3 credits per summer school session. Graduate assistants with one-half time appointments may take up to 12 credit hours per semester during the fall and spring semesters and up to 3 credits per summer school session.

## **Reduced Tuition Benefits, Stipends and Salary**

The salary paid to a graduate assistant is the total value of the tuition reduction plus the per-semester stipend. Although a graduate assistant is considered part of the

university's staff, he/she is not considered a permanent employee and, therefore, generally is not eligible for employee benefits such as sick leave, vacation, retirement, or insurance, regardless of the level / type of assistantship. (See BOR Policy 5.5.)

## **Reduced Tuition Benefits**

To help universities recruit highly qualified students, the Board of Regents has adopted a special tuition rate for eligible graduate students. Graduate assistants are assessed one-third (1/3) of the resident graduate tuition rate for all graduate state-support courses. They are also assessed one-third (1/3) of the resident undergraduate tuition rate for all undergraduate state-support courses. (See BOR Policy 2.22 and 5.15.)

The reduced tuition benefit goes into effect the semester in which the student begins the assistantship. Graduate students who qualify for reduced tuition benefits during the fall or spring semesters may also be eligible for reduced tuition benefits during the subsequent summer school sessions. Graduate students may qualify for only one type of tuition reduction benefit in any given semester (i.e., tuition reduction benefit granted to graduate assistants versus tuition reduction benefit granted to South Dakota K-12 teachers).

Graduate assistants who ask to be released from their assistantship appointments before the end of the semester are expected to repay the tuition reduction benefits received that semester.

When a graduate program is offered cooperatively by two or more regental institutions, the Board of Regents may determine that graduate assistants who are eligible for the tuition reduction benefit at one institution are eligible for that same benefit at the other regental institution(s).

## **Stipends**

The Board of Regents establishes minimum stipends for graduate assistants. These minimum stipends are evaluated each year by the Board of Regents at their March meeting.

## **Withdrawal of Graduate Students**

A student may withdraw from a class or from the system during the approved withdrawal period as published by Enrollment Services.

### **Withdrawal from a Class**

Students may drop and/or add a course within the official drop/add period by following the procedure published by Enrollment Services.

A student may withdraw from a course class any time after the end of the official drop/add period up until the date published as last day to withdraw in the academic calendar. However, a maximum of six withdrawals is permitted per student in a graduate program.

Students are not allowed to withdraw from specific courses after the published final withdrawal date, except under extenuating circumstances and only with the approval of the student's advisor, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Anticipated course failure is not considered an extenuating circumstance.

The student who withdraws receives a "W" grade. A "W" grade does not affect GPA.

### **Withdrawal from the University**

The effective date of withdrawal is the date such a request is initiated. Failure to officially withdraw will result in failing grades for all courses in which the student was enrolled.

### **Withdrawal from a Course**

Graduate students are responsible for evaluating the impact of their decisions on their Plan of Study, and revising their Plan of Study accordingly. Students should consult with their advisor prior to withdrawal from a course.

Students withdrawing from a course during the approved withdrawal period may do so by using the Student Information System or by contacting the Registrar's Office.

### **Withdrawal from the University**

To withdraw from all courses, graduate students should contact the Registrar's Office. The office will coordinate the notification process so that all appropriate offices and persons are made aware of the withdrawal. Exit survey is done by the Office of Vice President of Student Affairs.

## **Transfer of Credits for Graduate Programs**

Academic courses will be transferred as meeting graduation requirements if the courses parallel the scope and depth requirements for the degree or if the courses meet electives required for the degree. (See BOR Policy 2:5 Transfer of Credit)

The following minimum conditions must be met before graduate-level credit can be accepted:

- The institution is regionally accredited at the Master's level.

- The student must have been in good standing at the institution from where the credit is transferred.
- The grades in courses transferred are "B" or better;
- The transfer credits must have been completed no more than four five years prior to commencement of the DSU graduate degree program.
- No more than 9 credits may be applied to another master's degree.

The program committee for each degree program may establish specific program level processes and criteria for course evaluation. Transfer credit from another institution will be recorded on a DSU transcript only if the transfer work is accepted as part of a DSU graduate degree. Limitations on transfer credit are determined by BOR Policy 2:26.

### **Credits in Residence**

A student may pursue two degrees at the same time and share credits between the two programs if granted permission by the program coordinators and the Graduate Dean (nine credit maximum). If the student applies to a new program, the Graduate Office will assure the two programs are aware that the student is working on degrees simultaneously.

The request for transfer credit should accompany the Plan of Study during the first semester in the program in order to avoid any misunderstanding regarding acceptance of such credit. An official transcript must accompany all requests for approval of transfer credit, unless such transcript is on file with the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

The graduate program's coordinator will coordinate the evaluation of the credit transfer request with members of the graduate program's committee. The transfer credit approval form must be signed by the graduate program's coordinator, the college dean, and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. All students must have an approved Plan of Study for each program in which they are all enrolled. Students may appeal transfer credit decisions.

### **Graduate Advising**

Graduate students have final responsibility for their success in their chosen graduate program. However, students will benefit from the guidance, counsel, and support of faculty who serve as their advisors.

Each college with a graduate program has responsibility for academic advising. The appropriate program coordinator is responsible for appointing the academic advisor immediately after the student has been admitted to the program and notifying the student.

An advisor has the following responsibilities:

- Advising and assisting students with the development of their Plan of Study and recommending it to the respective program coordinator for approval;
- Communicating on a regular basis with their advisees;
- Maintaining accurate records on his or her advisees and monitoring student progress;
- Approving amendments to the Plan of Study (along with the program coordinator);
- Guiding with the selection of a dissertation, thesis or capstone project topic;
- Assisting advisees as needed with their dissertation, thesis or project supervisor) in preparing for and completion of the dissertation, thesis or capstone project;
- Reviewing and approving the Application for Candidacy of doctoral students and recommending it to the program coordinator for approval.

The graduate program coordinator will assign an academic advisor to each student upon entry to a graduate program. Advisors must be members of the graduate faculty. Advisors will correspond with their advisees at least once per semester to monitor and track progress in relation to their Plan of Study. Advisors will have access to the program files on their advisees.

## **Credit for Courses Offered Via Alternative Delivery Systems**

### **Credit by Examination**

Graduate students may petition the program coordinator to receive credit by examination for a course. If permission is granted, a grade of "B" or better is required on the exam. An exam may only be taken once per course. The graduate program coordinator will coordinate the evaluation of the credit by examination.

### **Credit for work experience**

No credit will be offered for prior work experience.

## **Grades and Grading**

Graduate grades will be assigned to the Graduate Academic Level and to all courses and sections with course numbers of 500 or greater. See BOR Policy 2:10 Grades and Use of Grade Point Average for a complete description of grades used and calculation of grade point averages.

### **Incomplete Grade**

An incomplete ("I") grade may be awarded under specific conditions as outlined in BOR Policy 2:10, Grades and Use of Grade Point Average. For each incomplete given, the instructor must notify the student of the conditions attached to the incomplete and

enter the "I" grade and expiration date into relevant University systems. Any student with unresolved "I" grades for courses in their academic programs will not be certified for graduation.

## **Normal Progression**

An instructor may assign a Normal Progress grade (NP) to a graduate student if the program committee has determined this is an appropriate grade for the particular course, and the instructor determines that the student is making normal progress in the course. The NP grade is normally used when completion of the course extends beyond the current term (e.g., project or thesis courses). A change from an "NP" to a letter grade requires only the signature of the instructor. (See BOR Policy 2:10 Grades and Use of Grade Point Average) for additional discussion of (NP) grade.

## **Change of Grade**

Changes from one letter grade to another must be initiated by the instructor on a Change of Grade Form and signed by the instructor and the dean of the college offering the course. A justification for the change must be provided. The Vice President for Academic Affairs must approve such changes. A change from an "I" to a letter grade requires only changing the grade in appropriate University systems and/or contacting the Registrar's Office.

## **Repeating a Course/Grade Replacement**

Students must repeat any course with a "D" or "F" grade. Only the courses in an academic program will count in calculating the student's GPA. The grade on the repeated course will replace the original grade and will be used in calculating GPA. Students may not repeat a course more than once.

## **Candidacy for Doctoral Students**

Upon completion of all program requirements, except dissertation, students must submit their application for candidacy to their program coordinator. The application for advancement to candidacy will include a summary of all courses and degree requirements to be applied toward the degree. Filing of this application indicates that the student is entering the final stages of degree completion. Admission to candidacy requires review and approval of the Candidacy application by the student's advisor and the graduate program coordinator.

For doctoral students to be advanced to candidacy, students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Successful completion of all specified courses of their Plan of Study for the doctoral program in which they are enrolled.
2. Successfully complete their comprehensive exam.



The students' advisor and graduate program coordinator will review and approve the document. The original form will be forwarded to the Program coordinator. After ensuring that all candidacy requirements have been met, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research will certify the student is eligible for candidacy and will notify the program coordinator and the student. Doctoral students are then referred to as doctoral candidates or ABD (All But Dissertation).

The students' advisor and graduate program coordinator may request that the Office of Graduate Studies and Research terminate the candidacy of a student who does not show ability to complete the degree. When necessary, the program coordinator should submit a separate written request for each student recommended for termination to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

## **Dissertation / Thesis / Project Committees**

All dissertation / thesis / project committees for graduate degrees are ad hoc committees, acting on behalf of the Graduate Council. Committees are intended to oversee completion of capstone graduate activities, including completion of master's project, master's thesis, and doctoral dissertations. Dissertation / thesis / project committees are critical to good graduate education through their role in:

- Reviewing and approving the student's dissertation, thesis, or project proposal.
- Directing and guiding the student's research, development, and writing activities relative to their project, thesis, or dissertation.
- Evaluating and monitoring the student's progress towards completion of their project, thesis or dissertation.
- Providing the student with discipline expertise and guidance.
- Upholding the university's standards and policies relative to graduate education.

## **Committee Membership**

All dissertation / thesis / project committees are comprised of a chair (or two co-chairs) and up to four additional members, as indicated below. The chair must be a member of the DSU graduate faculty and should possess expertise in the student's chosen topic. The chair, selected by the graduate student but subject to the approval processes described below, is responsible for working with the graduate student to identify the other faculty members on the committee. One dissertation committee member should be external to the discipline to the program faculty.

All committee members must have the terminal degree for their field or approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The committee membership and the committee chairmanship are approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, based on the recommendations of the student's academic advisor and the graduate program coordinator.

**Dissertation / Thesis Committees:** Dissertation / thesis committees must include at least two additional members with terminal degrees, plus the chair or co-chairs:

- **Program representative:** The program representative is a DSU graduate faculty member or an affiliate graduate faculty member (as designated by the Graduate Council) in the student's program of study.
- **Graduate Council representative:** The Graduate Council representative is a DSU graduate faculty member who is outside the graduate student's program of study. The Graduate Council representative should possess sufficient familiarity with the student's research topic to review and comment on the manuscript. This committee member verifies that Graduate Council policies and procedures have been followed, ensures fair treatment of the graduate student, and ensures that the quality of the research is commensurate with the student's degree objectives.

At the request of the student, two additional members may be added but are not required:

- Graduate faculty members from the student's program of study who possess experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation AND/OR
- Committee member who is not a member of the DSU graduate faculty but who possesses experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation. To be accepted as a member of the dissertation / thesis committee, the proposed member must submit a curriculum vitae or resume and be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

**Project Committees:** Project committees must include at least one additional member plus the chair or co-chairs:

- **Program representative:** the program representative is a DSU graduate faculty member or an affiliate graduate faculty member (as designated by the Graduate Council) in the student's program of study.
- At the request of the student, these additional members may be added but are not required.
- Graduate faculty member from the student's program of study who possesses experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation OR
- Committee member who is not a member of the DSU graduate faculty but who possesses experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation. To be accepted as a member of the project committee, the proposed member must submit a curriculum vitae or resume and be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

**Summary of Committee Membership:**

**Master's Project Committee:** Chair or Co-Chairs, plus minimum of one program representative.

Master's Thesis Committee: Chair or Co-Chairs, plus minimum of one program representative and one Graduate Council representative.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee: Chair or Co-Chairs, plus minimum of one program representative and one Graduate Council representative.

As soon as feasible, the student and his/her academic advisor will identify a graduate faculty member to serve as their dissertation / thesis / project committee chair. The student, working with their committee chair, will identify committee members as outlined above. The student's advisor will review the composition of the committee with the graduate program coordinator and will forward their recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research for approval.

If a committee vacancy should occur, or if the student wishes to change the composition of the committee, the student should discuss the changes with the committee chair. The chair forwards that recommendation to the program coordinator and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research for approval.

In the special case where the student wishes to replace the chair of the committee, the student should discuss the changes with the graduate program coordinator. The graduate program coordinator may assist the student in addressing the issues with the current committee chair or identify an alternate committee chair. The graduate program coordinator forwards that recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research for approval.

## **Application for Graduation**

The university requires that candidates eligible for graduation must file an Application for Graduation with the Registrar's Office by the published deadline found in the Academic Calendar of the semester of their intended graduation. Submission of this Application for Graduation will trigger a graduation eligibility review by the Registrar's Office. Students will not be permitted to graduate in the intended semester if this document is not submitted on time.

Students are responsible for submitting an Application for Graduation by the published date on the university academic calendar.

The Registrar's Office in consultation with appropriate student advisors and program coordinators, will review the files for each student filing an Application for Graduation to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met.

After ensuring that all graduation requirements have been met, the Registrar will certify the student as eligible for graduation.

## **Archiving of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations**

Academic theses and dissertations have enduring value as records of scholarship at Dakota State University. They serve as the final reports of research conducted at the institution, by students of the institution, under the direction of the faculty of the institution. Therefore, the University preserves and makes available these theses to scholars and the public by maintaining an archival collection and a circulating collection. The Karl E. Mundt Library is responsible for processing and managing both collections.

1. Master's theses must be bound according to the information provided in the Bindery Form. The requirements described in those guidelines apply only to the formatting of the manuscript, not to its scholarly content. The University requires that two bound copies be provided by the student.
2. Theses and dissertations must be printed on white, acid-free bond paper containing at least 50% rag (cotton bond) and measuring 8 ½ x 11 inches. Additional details can be found by calling the DSU Library at (605) 256-5203.
3. Binding fees are separate from printing costs. Contact the DSU Print Shop for information on costs of reproducing a thesis or dissertation.
4. Students may purchase additional binding services from the DSU Library. Additional fees will apply for mailing of bound copies of theses and dissertations.
5. Every approved thesis and dissertation manuscript completed by a DSU student is permanently preserved in the University Archives. A second bound copy is available for public access and circulation as part of the Mundt Library collection.
6. An electronic copy of the thesis or dissertation must be sent to the DSU Library. Call (605) 256-5203 for information about submitting an electronic copy.
7. The University requires that all completed theses and dissertations be submitted to ProQuest. ProQuest charges a fee for copyright registration, but it can be obtained by the student through U.S. Copyright Office for no charge. For details on how to submit a thesis or dissertation to ProQuest, please call the DSU Library at (605) 256-5203.