

GRADUATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



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Please note

This document was updated to incorporate revised university policies that were approved Fall 2020 and the change from Graduate Forms 1-4 to the Graduate Dashboard.

Those changes are as follows:

Graduate Courses Taken by Undergraduate Students, p. 6

Credit for Prior Learning, p. 6

Graduate Residence and Transfer of Credit, p. 9

Graduate Time Limitation on Program Completion, p. 10

Degree Completion Procedures through Graduate Dashboard, p. 11

Graduate Policies and Regulations

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Chapter 1: Admission

Degree Seeking Admission

Admission to a graduate degree or certificate program is considered only after all required application materials have been received and reviewed. Incomplete files are not reviewed.

Upon receipt of the completed application including all required materials, the file is forwarded to the graduate program for review. The graduate program reviews the file for admission or denial and the file is forwarded to the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning for approval. The file is next routed back to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning and a formal notice of acceptance or denial is sent to the applicant by the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning.

The following admission categories are used:

1. Full Standing. This status is used when all program admission requirements are fully met and recommended by the graduate program coordinator for admission.
2. Provisional. This status is used when applicant shows potential for success in a graduate program. The graduate program coordinator and the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning determine the specific provisions that must be met by the student before full standing can be granted.
3. Conditional. This status is used when recommended for admission by the graduate program coordinator and there is a degree pending for admission.
4. Denial. This status is used when applicant does not meet the program admission requirements or applicant is not recommended for admission by the graduate program coordinator.

Master's Degree Application Procedures and Materials

Admission to a Master's degree programs requires submission of the following materials. All materials are submitted to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning online through Hobson's Radius.

1. Complete [Graduate Online Application](#).
2. Official transcripts from ALL colleges and universities attended sent directly from the institution to the MSUM Office of Graduate and Extended Learning. Transcripts issued to students are not considered official and may not be substituted for official transcripts. Transcripts from other MnSCU schools do not need to be requested or sent by the applicant. See [Transcript Policy](#) for more details.
3. A non-refundable \$35.00 fee for first-time graduate applicants to Minnesota State University Moorhead.
4. Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution.
5. Undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.0 or at least 3.25 for the last 30 semester credits.
6. Other items as required by specific programs. Such individual requirements are defined under the specific program descriptions.
7. International students must submit additional materials for INS compliance as outlined in the International Students section.

Specialist Degree Application Procedures and Materials

Admission to a Specialist degree programs requires submission of the following materials. All materials are submitted to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning online through Hobson's Radius.

1. Complete [Graduate Online Application](#).
2. Official transcripts from ALL colleges and universities attended sent directly from the institution to the MSUM Office of Graduate and Extended Learning. Transcripts issued to students are not considered official and may not be substituted for official transcripts. Transcripts from other MnSCU schools do not need to be requested or sent by the applicant. See [Transcript Policy](#) for more details.
3. A non-refundable \$35.00 fee for first-time graduate applicants to Minnesota State University Moorhead.
4. Master's degree from a regionally accredited institution.
5. Undergraduate and graduate cumulative GPA of 3.0 or at least 3.25 for the last 30 semester credits.
6. Other items as required by specific programs. Such individual requirements are defined under the specific program descriptions.
7. International students must submit additional materials for INS compliance as outlined in the International Students section.

Doctorate Degree Application Procedures and Materials

Admission to a Specialist degree programs requires submission of the following materials. All materials are submitted to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning online through Hobson's Radius.

1. Complete [Graduate Online Application](#).
2. Official transcripts from ALL colleges and universities attended sent directly from the institution to the MSUM Office of Graduate and Extended Learning. Transcripts issued to students are not considered official and may not be substituted for official transcripts. Transcripts from other MnSCU schools do not need to be requested or sent by the applicant. See [Transcript Policy](#) for more details.
3. A non-refundable \$35.00 fee for first-time graduate applicants to Minnesota State University Moorhead.
4. Master's degree from a regionally accredited institution.
5. Graduate cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher.
6. Other items as required by specific programs. Such individual requirements are defined under the specific program descriptions.
7. International students must submit additional materials for INS compliance as outlined in the International Students section.

Graduate Certificate Application Procedures and Materials

Admission to a Graduate Certificate program requires submission of the following materials. All materials are submitted to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning online through Hobson's Radius.

1. Complete [Graduate Online Application](#).
2. Official transcripts from ALL colleges and universities attended sent directly from the institution to the MSUM Office of Graduate and Extended Learning. Transcripts issued to students are not considered official and may not be substituted for official transcripts. Transcripts from other MnSCU schools do not need to be requested or sent by the applicant. See [Transcript Policy](#) for more details.

3. A non-refundable \$35.00 fee for first-time graduate applicants to Minnesota State University Moorhead.
4. Other documents as required by specific certificate programs. Such individual requirements are defined under the specific graduate certificate descriptions.
5. Graduate certificates are not open to international student applicants.

International Students

A student who has obtained the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree and is planning to pursue education beyond the Bachelor's degree at the graduate level should apply as a graduate student.

- International students who reside-outside of the U.S. and who wish to remain outside of the U.S. may be admitted to the following online graduate programs, subject to admission requirements: Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, MBA, and Special Education.
- International students who currently reside in the U.S. or who wish to obtain a student visa to study in the U.S. may be admitted to the following graduate programs, subject to admission requirements: Accounting and Finance, Speech-Language Pathology and Teaching English as a Second Language.
- International students who currently reside in the U.S. or who wish to obtain a student visa to study in the U.S. may not be granted admission to these graduate programs: Counseling, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, Healthcare Leadership, Master of Business Administration, Nursing, and Special Education. This is due to the online nature of these graduate programs and federal regulations regarding face-to-face course requirements
- International students who require an I-20 and Visa are not eligible for admission to Graduate Certificates or as non-degree seeking students.

International student admission requires submission of the following materials. All materials are submitted to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning.

1. Complete [Graduate Online Application](#).
2. A non-refundable \$35.00 fee for first-time graduate applicants to Minnesota State University Moorhead.
3. Completed Graduate Student Sponsor Form listing the availability of adequate monetary support for the duration of graduate study and an official bank statement. The current requirement is at least U.S. \$20,720.00 per year in U.S. funds. Verification of additional funds is necessary if you are bringing a spouse or other family members as follows: \$4,000 for the first dependent (or spouse) and \$2,100 for each additional dependent.
4. Cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
5. Completed Graduate Student Transfer Form (if appropriate).
6. Completed Graduate Student Agreement form.
7. For those whose native language is not English, an official score from either the TOEFL (6678 MSUM school code) or the IELTS. The TOEFL required score is 550 (paper-based), 213 (computer-based), or 78-80 (internet-based). A band score of 6.5 is required on the IELTS.
8. Comprehensive course-by-course transcript evaluation by Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) or World Education Services (WES) for transcripts from all post-secondary colleges and universities outside of the United States. [<http://www.ece.org/> or <http://www.wes.org/>] Do not send these transcripts directly to MSUM. ECE or WES evaluation must certify international degree as equivalent to a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited American institution.
9. International students must purchase the University health insurance. No exceptions will be made.

Application Deadlines for Degree Seeking Students

Applications to the following degree programs have firm and priority deadlines:

Counseling: Summer Semester, February 15

EdD in Educational Leadership: Spring Semester, November 1

Speech-Language Pathology: Fall Semester, January 15

Applications to the following degree programs have flexible and/or rolling admissions:

Accounting and Finance

Curriculum and Instruction

Educational Leadership (MS and Specialist)

Healthcare Administration (MHA)

MBA

MBA with Healthcare

Nursing

Special Education

Teaching ESL

Non-Degree Seeking Admission

Students with a baccalaureate degree who wish to take courses for graduate credit but who are not seeking admission to a graduate program may enroll as a non-degree seeking student. International students who require an I-20 and Visa are not eligible for admission as non-degree seeking students.

1. Students who later wish to be admitted to a graduate degree program must submit a new application and meet all admission criteria for the specific program.
2. Credits earned as a non-degree seeking student may later be applied to a degree program with advisor approval, but cannot exceed nine (9) semester credits. Any student enrolled in the 18 Online Initiative may apply the 18 content area credits to the MS in Curriculum and Instruction degree.
3. Non-degree seeking students are not eligible for most types of financial aid.
4. Students who are denied admission to a degree program may register as non-degree seeking students only with special permission from the graduate program coordinator.
5. Application Process
 - a. Complete [Graduate Online Application](#).
 - b. A non-refundable \$35.00 fee for first-time graduate applicants to Minnesota State University Moorhead.
 - c. Unofficial copy of undergraduate degree transcript.
 - d. Cumulative GPA of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale.

Application Deadlines for Non-Degree Seeking Students

Applications must be completed ten (10) days before the beginning of classes for the starting semester.

Chapter 2: Graduate Degree Information

Course Registration

Registration for classes is done via the web by logging into eServices at www.mnstate.edu/eservices/ LOGIN with your StarID and Password. Students are advised to consult with their program for specific registration procedures. Registration begins in approximately the middle of the previous term and continues through the fifth day of the term being enrolled in. Detailed information is available at www.mnstate.edu/registrar/registration/

Course Load

The normal course load for a graduate student is twelve (12) semester credits. Eight (8) graduate semester credits of enrollment are required for full-time status for students receiving financial aid, including the graduate assistant or work-study awards; students that are enrolled for six-seven (6-7) semester graduate credits are entitled to pro-rated financial aid. Permission of the appropriate graduate program and the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning is required for registration in excess of fifteen (15) graduate semester credits in any academic term.

Graduate Course Designations

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2023

Courses at the 600 and 700 level are offered for graduate credit only. Courses offered at the 600 level are open to graduate students or to undergraduate seniors who meet specific requirements. Courses at the 500 level may be counted toward a graduate degree; these courses may also be offered as 400 level courses for undergraduates. Graduate students are expected to perform on a qualitatively higher level in the 500 level courses. At least one half of the credits meeting the degree requirement (exclusive of Dissertation, Thesis, or Project/Action Research/Portfolio) must be in 600 or 700 level courses.

Auditing Courses

University Policy, Custodian: Registrar, Next Review: TBD

Students who wish to audit or attend a course without seeking credit must be admitted to the University, be registered for the course, and pay full tuition and fees. Classes taken for audit are not eligible for financial aid and do not count toward full-time status. Students may be billed for financial aid if classes taken for credit are later changed to audit status.

To audit a course, students shall attend class sessions but are not required to complete assignments or projects, participate in discussions, take examinations, or meet other requirements.

Students may declare the intent to audit a course by submitting a Course Audit form signed by the instructor by the tenth class day of a semester. Summer Session dates vary based on the length of individual sessions; refer to Drop Dates posted on the Registrar's Office website at

mnstate.edu/registrar, or by notifying the instructor at the time of registration in an evening class, workshop, or off-campus course.

Students may not receive credit for auditing a course except by re-enrollment for credit and successful completion of the course in a subsequent semester.

An entry of "AU" (Audit) is made on a student's permanent academic record when a course is audited.

Graduate Courses Taken by Undergraduate Students

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Fall 2026

1. Requirements to take 500 or 600 level courses:
 - a. Completion of a minimum of 90 semester credits towards a bachelor's degree.
 - b. Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
 - c. Any course prerequisites must be satisfied.
 - d. "[Request by Undergraduate to Register for Graduate Credit](#)" form must be signed and approved by the instructor and the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning in advance of registration.
2. Graduate credits may be applied to meet any requirements for the baccalaureate degree with approval from the undergraduate advisor.

Credit for Prior Learning

University Policy, Custodian: Registrar, Next Review: Fall 2025

Credit for prior learning is undergraduate or graduate level academic credit awarded for demonstrated university-level learning gained through learning experiences outside Minnesota State University Moorhead credit-bearing courses and assessed by MSUM faculty using academically sound and rigorous methods and processes.

MSUM shall provide current, comprehensive, and accessible information on opportunities to obtain credit for prior learning to prospective and admitted students as part of degree planning and advising. MSUM shall provide opportunities for enrolled students to demonstrate university-level learning achieved through prior learning experiences outside of the MSUM credit-bearing course that is applicable to courses, programs, or degree requirements.

MSUM shall determine the credit award for students who demonstrate prior learning consistent with system procedures. Credit awarded for prior learning may fulfill LASC, program/major/minor, and/or elective courses. Credit may be awarded at the lower-division, upper-division, and graduate level.

Credit awarded for prior learning by a college or university must be accepted in transfer by MSUM in accordance with System Procedure 3.21.1 Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer.

There is no limit to the amount of credit that may be awarded for prior learning assessments.

An academic appeal may be used by students who are denied credit requested for prior learning.

Please refer to University Policy for External and Internal Assessments.

Graduate Grades and Grade Points

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Fall 2026

Grades given in graduate courses include A, B, C, D, F, P (Satisfactory), and AU. In a continuing research course, a student may be given a grade of "IP" until the course is completed. "W" signifies withdrawal without penalty from the course. Only those credits which were completed with a grade of A, B, C, or P may be applied toward a graduate degree. Graduate programs may designate core courses which must be completed with a grade of A or B in order to count toward the degree.

Grading Policy

University Policy, Custodian: Registrar, Next Review: Fall 2021

All study for university credit may be recorded with the following grade designations:

A+	4.00 Grade points per credit	D	1.00 Grade points per credit
A	4.00 Grade points per credit	D-	0.67 Grade points per credit
A-	3.67 Grade points per credit	F	0.00 Grade points per credit
B+	3.33 Grade points per credit	FN	0.00 Grade points per credit
B	3.00 Grade points per credit	I	Incomplete
B-	2.67 Grade points per credit	P	Pass
C+	2.33 Grade points per credit	IP	In Progress
C	2.00 Grade points per credit	AU	Audit
C-	1.67 Grade points per credit	W	Withdrawal
D+	1.33 Grade points per credit	EX	Exchange

Grade changes may be submitted by the instructor or dean up to three years after the conclusion of the course.

Grade Point Average

The grade point average (GPA) is computed by dividing the number of grade points earned in a given course or courses by the number of credits attempted. The GPA is based on MSUM grades only. Transfer courses are not used in computing the GPA.

Credits with grades of "P", "I", "IP", "AU", "W", or "EX" are not included in computing the GPA.

Credits with grades of "F" and "FN" are included in computing the GPA.

In Progress Grades

The grade of in progress or "IP" is reserved for special cases and means the particular course is not designed to be completed by the end of the term. An "IP" must be completed by the student within two semester (undergraduate courses) and four semesters (graduate courses), not including summer. If the in progress grade is not completed within the specified time, a grade of "F" will be awarded. Students should never complete the course by re-registering for the class. "IP" grades will be converted to "F" before a degree is conferred.

Pass/Fail Courses (P/F Grades)

Certain courses which offer insufficient opportunity for graded evaluation may be offered with only the grading options of Pass "P" or Fail "F". Student teaching and internships are always graded on a pass-fail basis.

Pass/Fail Courses (P/F Grades) Option

Students with sophomore, junior, or senior standing may request to take letter graded courses on a P/F basis. Students may not request this option for courses required for their major or minor program. No course taken with P/F grading may be applied to the Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum (LASC).

Students may make this request for only one course per semester. Students may apply up to 16 credits under the P/F grading option to a baccalaureate degree program.

No letter graded course which a student has previously failed may be repeated under the P/F grading option.

A grade of “P” will be recorded for any course successfully completed under the P/F option. The grade of “F” will be recorded if the course is failed and computed in the GPA.

A P/F Grading form to request the P/F grading option must be returned to the Records Office on or before the tenth class day of the semester. Summer Session due dates vary based on the length of individual sessions and classes. Once the form has been submitted, the student may not change the course back to letter grading.

Incomplete Credits

The mark of I (Incomplete) is granted when students are unable to complete course requirements for reasons beyond their control and when arrangements have been made with the instructor before the end of the semester. If an incomplete requires substantial class attendance in a subsequent term, the student must register to repeat the course and pay tuition and fees.

“I” grades are administered by completion of the “Incomplete Grade” form by the student and instructor. “I” grades must be completed by the finish of the next semester or they will change to “F”. All “I”: grades will be converted to an “F” before a degree is conferred. Grade changes may be submitted by the instructor or dean up to three years after the conclusion of the course.

Continuing/Continuous Registration in a Graduate Program

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2023

Candidates for graduate degrees must be enrolled for graduate academic credit at the time they sit for the final oral defense (including Summer Session). In addition, some graduate programs have a continuous enrollment policy (Counseling, Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Nursing, School Psychology, and Speech-Language Pathology). Students should view the program description pages in the bulletin for specific program requirements.

Unless dictated differently by a program, students may fulfill this requirement in one of four ways:

1. Concurrent enrollment in course work.
2. Enrollment for Thesis (699) or Dissertation (799).
3. Enrollment for Project/Action Research/Portfolio (692, 695, 696, 795 or 796).
4. Enrollment for one credit in Continuing Registration (698 or 798).

Graduate Residence and Transfer of Credit

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2026

1. **Residence requirement.** At least one-half of the semester credits constituting the minimum requirements for the master's degree, specialist degree, or graduate certificate must be completed through registration at Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) in courses offered by its faculty.
2. **Transfer of non-degree status credits.** Courses taken at MSUM as a non-degree seeking student prior to program admission will be transferred as follows:
 - a. Up to nine semester credits for a master's or specialist degree.
 - b. Up to one-half (maximum of eight) of the credits required for a graduate certificate.
 - c. Up to 18 semester credits from the 18 Online Initiative into the Curriculum and Instruction program as a content specialization or into the Master of Business Administration program.
 - d. At least 21 semester credits for a master's or specialist degree program or one-half of the semesters credits for a graduate certificate, must be taken after program admission, except in the case of the 18 Online as stated in 2.c. of this policy.
3. **Transfer of credits into the Ed.D.** Up to 27 semester credits (12 semester credits from an initial master's degree and 15 semester credits from a subsequent master's degree and/or graduate work not applied toward the initial master's degree) or up to 27 semester credits from a doctoral degree may be transferred into the Doctor of Education (EdD) degree.
4. **Transfer from other Minnesota State system universities.** Courses from another Minnesota State system university may be transferred to a graduate degree program or a graduate certificate program based on the following: Up to 1/2 of the minimum course credits (not including project, thesis, internship, or practica credits) required for a master's or specialist degree may be transferred to an MSUM degree program with the approval of the graduate coordinator of the program involved.
 - a. Up to 1/2 of the minimum credits required for a graduate certificate may be transferred to an MSUM Certificate program upon the approval of the Graduate Certificate program coordinator.
 - b. If more than one graduate institution was attended previously, the student and advisor will determine which credits will be transferable but no more than 1/2 of the minimum course credits will be allowed.
 - c. An official transcript from each graduate institution from which the student wishes to transfer credits must be given to the Registrar's Office; the advisor will notify the Registrar's Office which transfer credits are approved by the program and they will be added to the MSUM transcript. This will apply to credits transferred upon initial admission to MSUM as well as any credits taken after admission. The total transfer credits may not be more than 1/2 of the minimum degree or certificate requirements.
5. **Transfer from Tri-College University.** Courses approved for registration through the Tri-College University are transferred upon approval of individual programs. A "600" course number from North Dakota State University (NDSU) cannot be transferred to an MSUM graduate degree program because NDSU transcripts state that these courses are not graduate level.
6. **Transfer from other accredited institutions.** If a student transfers to an MSUM master's degree, specialist degree, or graduate certificate program after attending an accredited graduate institution (other than a Minnesota State system campus), a maximum of nine (9) semester credits may be accepted in transfer from other accredited institutions. This must be approved by the program coordinator and the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning.

7. **Other requirements.**

- a. A grade of A or B is required in any courses to be included in a master's or specialist degree program or graduate certificate program and not taken at this university. No "P" or "S" grades may be transferred. Individual programs may approve credits with grades of A or B (not pass/fail) in workshops or in special in-service courses. No more than 1/6 of the required master's degree or graduate certificate credits may be counted from workshop or special in-service courses. Some continuing education courses from MSU Moorhead may be counted towards the master's or specialist degree or graduate certificate requirements. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the program coordinator and the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning.
- b. All courses submitted for degree requirements, including transfer credits, must be within the ten (10) year time limit. Some graduate programs have specific time requirements for degree completion. Check with your individual graduate program for verification.
- c. For the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree, up to 27 credits may be transferred into the 72 semester credit degree program in accordance with #3 of this policy. There are no date restrictions (age of courses) regarding the transfer of these 27 credits. Didactic, practicum, internship, and field experience credits may transfer, including those with a grade of "P" or "S."

Number of Credits Required for a Graduate Degree

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2026

A minimum of 30 credits is required for completion of a master's or specialist degree at Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM). In either Plan A or Plan B at least one-half of the credits (exclusive of thesis or Plan B project requirements) must be earned at the 600 level. A minimum of 72 credits is required for completion of an Ed.D. at MSUM. Specific program requirements are listed in the "Graduate Programs" section of the Graduate Bulletin.

Graduate Time Limitation on Program Completion

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2023

All requirements for the master's, specialist, and doctorate degrees must be completed within ten (10) years after completion of the first graduate course taken after program admission. All courses submitted for degree requirements, including transfer credits, must be within the ten (10) year time limit. Some graduate programs have specific time requirements for degree completion. Check with your individual graduate program for verification.

A student, in consultation with his/her advisor, may file an appeal with the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning for an extension of the time limitation. Extensions may be for one semester or a full year. Extensions will be considered on a per case basis. If the student has not finished the degree towards the end of a second extension, he/she must consult with his/her advisor and the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning to determine if another extension is warranted. Any extension given may require a detailed plan of completion as well as additional or repeated course work and/or research. This will be determined by the graduate program coordinator and the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning at the time that the extension is approved.

Students may also file an appeal with the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning to include courses beyond the 10 year time limit.

Re-Application to a Graduate Program

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2023

Students that had an incomplete application at the deadline, withdrew their application, were denied admission, or wish to change graduate programs must complete a new application for the next available admission term. The only items that can be moved forward to a new application file are official transcripts and official test scores.

Dual Graduate Degrees

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Fall 2026

Any student wishing to pursue multiple graduate degrees from Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) must meet all admission criteria/degree requirements for each program. Any duplication of coursework must follow current Transfer of Credit policy in the Graduate Bulletin.

Certification/Licensure

Programs of study at Minnesota State University Moorhead are designed to help graduates meet certification or licensure requirements in Minnesota and North Dakota, but actual certification or licensure is the function of the states, not of any college or university. Earning an academic degree does not lead automatically to state certification or licensure. It is the students responsibility to be aware of the requirements for the state in which they wish to work.

Background Checks

Background checks are required by many graduate programs. The type of check and the procedure varies. Please check with the specific graduate program coordinator for details.

Degree Completion Procedures through Graduate Dashboard

The Degree Completion Procedures are completed online using the Graduate Dashboard. All steps and approvals are sequential meaning that a step cannot be submitted until the prior step has been completed and approved by all necessary parties. Please note that the paper Forms 1-4 have been discontinued and all students must log on to the Graduate Dashboard to follow the Degree Completion Procedures. <https://my.mnstate.edu/GradStudies/>

1. **Course Planning:** Students are assigned a graduate advisor upon admission to a degree program. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the advisor to plan the appropriate courses in order to meet degree requirements. The plan should be recorded using the Course Planning tool. Timeline for submission: end of first semester as an admitted graduate student.
2. **Committee Selection:** Capstone requirements, including the dissertation, thesis, and project, require a committee for the oral exam. The student and advisor identify faculty to sit on the student's committee subject to approval by the Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning. The committee must include a minimum of 2 or 3 faculty, as described by each specific program, who have Graduate Faculty status. Timeline for submission: prior to beginning capstone requirements.
3. **Final Discourse Topic Approval:** Type of final discourse paper (dissertation, thesis, project, portfolio) and selection of the topic is discussed with the student's advisor. If Human Subjects are involved in the research, students must submit their research on IRBNet and have approval before beginning research. Please refer to your program's student handbook for additional information or schedule a meeting with your advisor. Timeline for submission: prior to beginning final discourse paper.

4. **IRB Approval:** Any research conducted at MSU Moorhead that involves human subjects must receive prior approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please refer to the IRB website for information on submitting research proposals. Be sure to allow time for the approval process before you begin your research. Once you have received IRB approval, please upload the approval letter to the Graduate Dashboard. Timeline for submission: prior to beginning research study.
5. **Written Comprehensive Examination:** Completion of the Written Comprehensive Examination is verified by the graduate program coordinator. A student who fails the comprehensive examination may repeat it during a subsequent term with program approval. A second failure will result in termination of degree program enrollment. Timeline for submission: after successfully completing Written Comprehensive Examination.
6. **Oral Defense:** All graduate students, regardless of program, complete a final oral defense. Students who fail the final oral defense cannot receive a passing grade on the project or thesis and will not receive the degree. Students may repeat the oral defense during a subsequent term with program approval. Timeline for submission: after successfully completing Oral Defense.
7. **Submission of Final Paper to RED:** Standards for the preparation of a research paper must conform to the manual of style required by the program in which the degree is taken. Students must work closely with their committee chair and committee in the preparation of their research paper.

RED is an open-access repository maintained by the Minnesota State University Moorhead Library to showcase, preserve, and provide access to the scholarly and creative work produced by the MSUM community.

A copy of each thesis and dissertation written by a graduate student at MSUM as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the graduate degree is deposited in RED. For those graduate students that elect to do a Project/Action Research, only the abstract is entered in RED. Instructions for creating accounts are available on the graduate website. Directions for submission of your final paper

- a. Students completing a Thesis (699) or Dissertation (799) will create an account in DigitalCommons (RED) and upload their final, advisor-approved copy in PDF format.
- b. Students completing a Project/Action Research (696 or 796) will create an account in DigitalCommons (RED) and enter their abstract only. Please discuss your project options with your advisor.

Timeline for submission: after completion of final research paper and prior to Degree Completion submission.

8. **Degree Completion:** This is the final step in the graduate degree completion process. Before completing this step, make sure that:
 - a. Your final paper or abstract has been submitted to RED (if required)
 - b. Official transcripts for any transfer credits have been submitted to the Office of the Registrar and are entered as a transfer course in the Course Planning tool.
 - c. All required coursework has been completed according to the correct program bulletin.
 - d. You have double checked your transcript for any past grades of I, IP, or Z and work with the instructor on submitting grade changes. Degrees will not be posted until ALL grades have been submitted and recorded.
 - e. Timeline for submission: one week before commencement.

9. **Commencement:** In the Graduate Dashboard, you must indicate your anticipated Program Completion Term to be eligible for that term's commencement. Degrees are posted to transcripts by the Registrar's Office three (3) times a year: at the end of the fall semester, spring semester, and summer session. There are two (2) commencement ceremonies during the year: at the end of fall semester in December and at the end of spring semester in May. Students completing all degree requirements during the summer are eligible to participate in either of the ceremonies and will select on Dashboard. Academic garb should be ordered from the Bookstore no less than eight weeks prior to commencement. Students who plan on participating in commencement will need to submit their hood to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning at least one week prior to commencement.

Graduate Comprehensive Examination, Oral Defense, and Research

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2023

In all graduate programs, a final integrating experience which assesses the body of knowledge that has been acquired through the course work and research is required. No degree is granted simply as the record of the accumulation of appropriate courses with adequate grades. The form of the final requirement differs among degree programs, but always includes an oral defense. In it, the examining committee discusses the dissertation, thesis or project/action research/portfolio research, the creative endeavor, or the integrating paper, and assesses the student's mastery of the several components of the degree course work.

Written Comprehensive Examination

Candidates in some graduate programs must demonstrate competence in the major field in a written comprehensive examination. The exam is normally taken at the completion of the course work and prior to undertaking the research component of the degree program. The major department or program will determine the nature of the examination which must be satisfactorily completed and reported to the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning. A student who fails the comprehensive examination may repeat it during a subsequent term with program approval. A second failure will result in termination of degree program enrollment.

Oral Defense

All graduate students, regardless of program, must complete a final oral defense.

Students who fail the final oral defense cannot receive a passing grade on the project or thesis and will not receive the degree. Students may repeat the oral defense during a subsequent term with program approval.

Research Components

Dissertation:

Every doctoral candidate will register for nine credits of Dissertation 799. Doctoral candidates will register for the nine credits in the final two semesters of the scheduled eight-semester cohort. Credit for the dissertation requires a successful dissertation defense in front of the dissertation committee and the completion of any related requirements as noted by the advisor.

Thesis:

A part of the program of every degree candidate completing a thesis is the demonstration of ability to do individual, independent work of a creative or investigative nature in an area related to the major field through the preparation of a thesis. The thesis will be supported by the work represented in 2-4 credit hours of registration in Thesis 699. No more than 4 hours of 699 may be counted in satisfying the minimum requirements for a degree. Credit hour registration in a given term may vary with the nature of the study, according to the department or area, and on the previous agreement between the student and the advisor for expected research effort and adequate supervision.

Project/Action Research/Portfolio:

Students enrolled for Project/Action Research/Portfolio (692, 695, 696, 795, or 796) complete a 1-6 credit project which will integrate the studies included in the individual's program. The project must be approved by the student's committee.

Research Involving Human Subjects

If research is to involve human subjects, the research plan or project will be reviewed by an approved university procedure to assure the protection and rights of those subjects and the procedure established for obtaining informed consent. Research of this type may not be initiated until it has been approved by a thesis or project examining committee and the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Forms are available online on the IRB website: <http://www.mnstate.edu/irb/>. Allow at least four (4) weeks during the academic year for IRB approval.

Final Form for Dissertation, Thesis, or Project/Action Research

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2023

Standards for the preparation of a research paper must conform to the manual of style required by the program in which the degree is taken. Students must work closely with their committee chair and committee in the preparation of their research paper.

RED is an open-access repository maintained by the Minnesota State University Moorhead Library to showcase, preserve, and provide access to the scholarly and creative work produced by the MSUM community.

A copy of each thesis and dissertation written by a graduate student at MSUM as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the graduate degree is deposited in RED. For those graduate students that elect to do a Project/Action Research, a copy of the abstract will be uploaded in RED.

- Students completing a Thesis (699) or Dissertation (799) will create an account in Digital Commons (RED) and upload their final, advisor-approved copy in PDF format.
- Students completing a Project/Action Research (696 or 796) will create an account in Digital Commons (RED) and upload an abstract only.
- Instructions for creating accounts are available on the graduate website.

Chapter 3: Academic Warning, Suspension and Appeals

Academic Warning and Suspension Policy

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review Spring 2026

All students at Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) are required to maintain satisfactory academic progress. This means there are cumulative GPA thresholds and a percent of credit completion that students must achieve. Students are responsible for determining their own academic status, both by monitoring the “Holds” section of the online web registration program, and by comparing their own progress to the standards listed below.

1. GPA Requirement for Continuation in Good Standing. Graduate Students are required to maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale to be continued in a graduate program. Graduate students must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher at the time of graduation.
2. Completion Rate Requirement for Continuation in Good Standing. All students must complete 67% of the sum of all MSUM credits attempted plus all transfer credits accepted.
 - a. MSUM credits attempted include all MSUM courses on a student's official record, including withdrawals, repeated courses, and grades of Incomplete.
 - b. MSUM withdrawals, grades of F, FN, NC, Incompletes, and missing grades count against percent completion because they result in zero credits earned for that course.
 - c. Transfer credits accepted and earned credits listed on the MSUM transcript are included in the percent completion calculation as attempted credits.
 - d. Percent completion is calculated by dividing the number of earned credits by the sum of MSUM attempted credits plus transfer credits accepted.
3. Academic warning, probation, and suspension holds are placed after the grading period at the end of each semester. Students whose cumulative GPA and completion rate meet the minimum standards are considered in “good standing”. A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic warning for the next semester in which the student enrolls. For students enrolled in a graduate program, the record will be reviewed by the student's graduate program coordinator and a remediation plan may be developed. During the academic warning semester, a minimum of 3.0 GPA must be achieved as well as the satisfactory completion of a remediation plan. A student's failure to satisfactorily complete a remediation plan and achieve a 3.0 in the semester following the academic warning semester will result in suspension from the graduate program.

Dismissal from a Graduate Program

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: Spring 2023

Graduate programs may initiate proceedings for the dismissal of a student from a program for one or more of the following reasons: GPA below 3.0, failure to meet the goals of a remediation plan, inadequate technical skills, lack of interpersonal skills required for the profession, and failure to pass comprehensive exams or oral defense. Students may also be dismissed for unethical or non-professional conduct, including plagiarism and forgery.

Upon recommendation of the graduate program a document detailing specific problem areas, attempts at remediation, and a notice of dismissal from the program will be submitted to the student, Dean of Graduate and Extended Learning, and the college dean.

A student may appeal any of the decisions if the outcome(s) affect the student's academic or financial aid status. Graduate students follow procedures for Graduate Academic Appeal.

Academic Honesty

University Policy, Custodian: VP for Academic Affairs, Next Review: 2024

The University expects all students to represent themselves in an honest fashion. In academic work, students are expected to present original ideas and give credit for the ideas of others.

- When an instructor has convincing evidence of cheating or plagiarism, a failing grade may be assigned for the course in which the student cheated. When a failing grade is assigned for this reason, the instructor shall report the offense, the evidence, and their action to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- If the instructor (or any other person) feels the seriousness of the offense warrants additional action, the incident may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Resolution.

Cheating

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- The use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations in the classroom or online learning environment.
- The use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments
- The acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of MSUM faculty or staff;
- Engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment
- The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials or misrepresentation of student work in an online environment (i.e. submitting work prepared by someone else).

Procedures

The Office of Student Conduct and Resolution will follow procedures set out in the Student Conduct Code. After the review of the case and a fair, unbiased hearing, the Office of Student Conduct and Resolution may take disciplinary action if the student is found to be responsible. A student who has a course grade reduced by an instructor because of cheating or plagiarism, and who disputes the instructor's finding, may appeal the grade, but only by using the Grade Appeal Policy, which states that the student must prove the grade was arbitrary, prejudicial, or in error.

Graduate Appeals

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review Spring 2026

All graduate students who wish to submit an appeal need to complete the Graduate Academic Appeals form. Course grade appeals must be submitted within six (6) weeks of the close of the semester in which the student received the grade. Appeals for retroactive withdrawals must be submitted within five years. All other appeals must be submitted within a year of the situation that generates the appeal. Detailed procedures for filing appeals may be obtained from the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning or online. The graduate student is responsible for following the designated procedures.

A graduate student may file a Graduate Academic Appeal for the following situations: retroactive withdrawal from courses, late course add/drop, admission decisions, termination, degree requirements, course substitutions, course waivers.

Course Grade Appeal

University Policy, Custodian: VP for Academic Affairs, Next Review: Fall 2021

- B. All students have the right to expect thoughtful and clearly defined approaches to course grading, but it must be recognized that varied standards and individual approaches to grading are valid. Course grading methods should be thoroughly explained to students at the beginning of the semester and must appear on the course syllabus.
- C. In a course grade appeal, only arbitrariness, prejudice, and/or error will be considered as legitimate bases for an appeal.
 - Arbitrariness: The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not exercise professional judgment in the matter.
 - Prejudice: The grade awarded was motivated by ill will, and is not indicative of the student's academic performance.
 - Error: The instructor made a mistake, or failed to give students required notice of grading policies in the syllabus.

If a student believes that discrimination or harassment were factors in the determination of the course grade awarded, a complaint should be filed with the Affirmative Action Officer under Minnesota State Colleges and Universities board policy.

- D. A student may appeal a grade reduced for academic dishonesty through the Course Grade Appeal Policy.
- E. The Course Grade Appeal process must be initiated by the student prior to the close of week six of the following semester. If the student moves to the formal grade appeal process it must be completed before the end of the semester in which the appeal was initiated.

In cases where an incomplete was originally assigned, an appeal must be made within six weeks of the date the final grade is posted by the Registrar's office and available to the student on the web. If the student uses the formal process, the process must be completed during the first ten weeks of the next academic year term.
- F. The Course Grade Appeal Process
 - 1. Step 1: Informal Process:
 - a. The student will discuss the issue with the instructor, and may consult with the department chairperson, in an attempt to resolve the matter.
 - b. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may discuss the issue with the dean in whose college the course was offered. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the student may choose to file a formal appeal.
 - 2. Step 2: Formal Process:
 - a. The student must request a Course Grade Appeal form from the dean. The student will submit the completed form, along with any supporting documentation, to the dean. It is recommended that the student keep a copy of all materials submitted. The dean will send the Course Grade Appeal Form and supporting documentation to the instructor.
 - b. The dean will discuss the matter with the instructor and the student in an attempt to resolve the appeal.
 - c. If no resolution can be reached, an ad hoc college committee will be formed. The dean will contact the Faculty Association President and request the appointment of one faculty member from the academic department offering the course, two faculty members from other departments within the college, and two upper division students who are majors in

fields represented in that college. The dean will ask for a volunteer from among the appointees to chair the committee.

- d. The instructor of the course will submit a written response to the appeal and supporting documentation of their choosing. The student will receive a copy of the material. Any material content protected by data privacy statutes will be redacted.
- e. The ad hoc appeals committee performs an investigative role and may request additional written information from the student and/or the instructor through the committee chairperson or the dean.
- f. Based on the information submitted, the committee will prepare a written finding with regard to the issues raised in the appeal (alleged arbitrariness, prejudice, and/or error on the part of the instructor). The committee will speak to one or more of the criteria as the basis for its finding. The committee chairperson will forward a written copy to the student, the instructor, and the dean.
- g. The instructor and the student may each respond in writing to the dean if they believe the committee's findings are acceptable or unacceptable. If either does not respond within seven days, the dean will assume that the committee's written findings are acceptable to that person.
- h. If no resolution has been reached, the dean will review the written findings of the committee and the responses of the instructor and the student. The dean will send his/her recommendation, the committee's written finding, and all supporting documentation and correspondence to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (or designee), the student, and the instructor.
- i. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (or designee) will review all the materials, and submit a written recommendation to the President (or designee), and copies of that recommendation to the student and the instructor. The President (or designee) will make the final decision.
- j. The final decision may take the form of a:
 - 1) recommendation to the instructor and/or
 - 2) change of grade and/or
 - 3) determination that no action is warranted.
- k. If at any time during the formal Course Grade Appeal Process resolution is reached, the Course Grade Appeal Process terminates.

Chapter 4: Graduate Faculty Appointment

Graduate Faculty Appointment & Review Policy

University Policy, Custodian: Graduate Council, Next Review: 2024

1. **The Purpose for Selection and Review of Graduate Faculty**

The quality of the graduate degrees granted by Minnesota State University Moorhead depends upon the qualifications and expertise of faculty involved in the entire graduate educational experience. Selection and review of Graduate Faculty is designed to account for quality, expertise, and participation in graduate education.

2. **Categories of Graduate Faculty**

a. *Doctoral Graduate Faculty*

b. *Masters/Specialist Graduate Faculty*

Records of faculty members in the first two categories shall be kept by the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning.

c. *Temporary Graduate Faculty*

Fixed term and adjunct faculty shall only be eligible for Temporary Graduate Faculty status.

3. **Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities of Graduate Faculty**

a. *Doctoral Graduate Faculty*

Doctoral Graduate Faculty may supervise doctoral research and chair doctoral committees in addition to the duties and privileges of Masters/Specialist Graduate Faculty status.

b. *Masters/Specialist Graduate Faculty*

Master's/Specialist Graduate Faculty shall be eligible to teach graduate courses (600 & 700 level), advise Master's and Specialist level graduate students, chair Master's and Specialist graduate student committees, serve on graduate student committees at any level, and be appointed to the Graduate Council.

c. *Temporary Graduate Faculty*

Temporary Graduate Faculty may teach at the 600 or 700 course level and may be appointed by the appropriate College Dean to serve as a committee member in cases where they have particular expertise.

4. **Criteria for Appointment to the Graduate Faculty**

In order to be appointed to the Graduate Faculty, faculty members must provide evidence as follows:

a. *Doctoral Graduate Faculty* must provide evidence of achievement in areas 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 below.

b. *Masters/Specialist Graduate Faculty* must provide evidence of achievement in at least three (3) of areas below, two (2) of which must be from areas 1-4 and one (1) of which must be from areas 5-7.

1) Holding a terminal degree in one's field (usually the doctorate).

2) Scholarly or creative activity in one's field in the last five years.

3) Relevant professional service and/or ongoing clinical or field-related experience and expertise in the last five years. (Examples are: consulting, professional presentations and/or reports, responsibilities in a professional association, productive recent advanced study, etc.)

- 4) Professional development activities in one's field in the last five years.
- 5) Serving as Major Advisor to graduate students.
- 6) Teaching graduate level courses (600 & 700 level) at MSUM or elsewhere.
- 7) Serving as a member of graduate student committees.

5. Procedures for Selection and Review of Graduate Faculty

- a. Except as indicated in 5c below, appointment or reappointment to Graduate Faculty status shall be for six years. Faculty may apply by submitting an application form, a current PDP, a current Vita, and any other documents they consider relevant. Applications may be done concurrently with the PDP reviews.
- b. Application materials are submitted to the Graduate Studies Office. The Graduate Studies Office will post the applications on a SharePoint site and give access to Department Chairs, College Deans, and Graduate Coordinators (if appropriate). All parties will be invited to review applications. Files will be considered approved and forwarded to the Graduate Council Subcommittee on Graduate Faculty Review unless an objection is received. The Graduate Council Subcommittee will review and make a recommendation to the Graduate Council. The Chair of the Graduate Council will forward the recommendation to the Provost. The Provost will formally appoint or deny all appointments to Graduate Faculty status.
- c. New MSUM faculty hired on a tenure track appointment to specifically teach master's/specialist graduate courses shall be given an initial two-year appointment to the Master's/Specialist Graduate Faculty during which time they must apply for regular appointment to Graduate Faculty status as indicated in 5a and 5b above. New MSUM faculty hired on a tenure track appointment to specifically teach doctoral graduate courses shall be given an initial two-year appointment to the Doctoral Graduate Faculty during which time they must apply for regular appointment to Graduate Faculty status as indicated in 5a and 5b above.
- d. Records of these reviews and decisions shall be maintained by the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning.

6. Temporary Graduate Faculty

Temporary Graduate Faculty shall be appointed for limited, short-term assignments upon recommendations from relevant Department Chair or Graduate Program Coordinator in order to provide special expertise on graduate student committees or to teach a graduate course on a limited or adjunct appointment. The Provost will formally appoint or deny all temporary appointments to Graduate Faculty status.

7. Appeals Procedure

Any faculty member wishing to appeal decisions made under these policies and procedures shall notify the appropriate College Dean in writing and shall submit relevant information in support of the appeal. The appropriate College Dean shall notify the Graduate Council and the Provost. The appeal shall be reviewed by the faculty member's College Dean, the Graduate Council, and the Provost in the order indicated. Each reviewer shall forward the appeal with recommendation to the next reviewer. The President shall formally grant or deny appointment to Graduate Faculty status. Records of these appeals and decisions shall be maintained by the Office of Graduate and Extended Learning.