

Master's Degree Policies

Plan of Study

Some programs do not require a Plan of Study to be filed with the Graduate College. Refer to your program handbook for more information.

The Plan of Study is an agreement between the student, the academic program, and the Graduate College that specifies all courses required to earn the graduate degree. This includes any qualifying transfer credits (see transfer credit policy below) and up to 10 credits taken as a non-degree NDSU graduate student toward the degree.

The Plan of Study must be approved by the student, the supervisory committee, the graduate program coordinator, and the Graduate College. The Plan of Study must be filed with the Graduate College by the end of the student's second semester of study. However, a student must be in good academic standing to file a Plan of Study.

A master's degree includes both didactic credits and non-didactic credits. Didactic credits are numbered 601-689, 691; 700-789, 791; 800-889 and 891. Non-didactic credits are numbered 690, 692-699; 790, 792-799; 890, 892-899. The 600 number range indicates a combined undergraduate/graduate course and 700 and 800 are masters and doctoral level courses. Courses that a student has used to fulfill the requirements of a baccalaureate degree may not be used on that student's graduate plan of study, unless taken as part of an accelerated degree program.

Each program is responsible for defining the requirements for a major in its disciplinary area and making this information available to students. Each student is responsible for familiarizing themselves with the requirements, rules, and recommendations.

The Graduate College allows credits taken as part of a certificate to be used towards the requirements for a master's degree. Programs may restrict the usage of these credits on the master's Plan of Study. Reference your program's handbook for more information.

Plan A Master's Degree

- Minimum 30 credits total
- 16 of the 30 must be didactic credits
- 6-10 credits of 798 Master's Thesis

Plan B Master's Degree

- Minimum 30 credits total
- 21 of the 30 must be didactic credits
- 2-4 credits of 797 Master's Paper

Plan C Master's Degree

- Minimum 30 credits total

Course Deletions or Substitutions

Course deletions or substitutions may be made with the Change to Plan of Study (<https://powerforms.docusign.net/20c075c4-741c-4c43-8767-4c48338ddfaf/?env=na3&acct=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7&accountId=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7>) form. The student, advisor, graduate program coordinator, and the Graduate College must approve changes.

Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit is requested at the time a Plan of Study or Change to Plan of Study is filed in the Graduate College. A maximum of 10 credits of graduate-level course work from regionally accredited colleges or universities (or equivalent for international institutions) may be eligible to be used in completing the student's degree program.

Transfer credit coursework must:

- meet degree program requirements
- be graduate level
- be verified by an official transcript from the transfer institution with grades posted
 - Transcript(s) must be filed in the Graduate College at the time the transfer of credit is requested
- not have been used to fulfill the requirements of a baccalaureate degree
- carry only grades of A or B on a 4.0 scale
 - Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory graded courses are not eligible for transfer
- not be a continuing education, correspondence, extension education, or workshop course

- not be internship, individual study, special topics, or research course
- have been earned within a 7-year period at the time of the student's final defense (Plan A/B options) or at the end of the student's last semester of coursework (Plan C option/non-thesis degree programs)

Departments and programs have the right to further restrict or eliminate acceptance of transfer credits for their degree programs. Prospective students are encouraged to contact the respective academic department or the Graduate College with transfer credit questions.