

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.

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.

The Plan of Study must be approved by the student, the supervisory committee, the graduate program coordinator, and the Graduate College and must be filed with the Graduate College by the end of the student's second semester of study.

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

Some programs have set curriculum and their own Plan of Study.

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

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. Official transcripts with grades posted from the transfer institutions must be on file in the Graduate College prior to approval of the Plan of Study. The supervisory committee and program administrator review transfer credits during Plan of Study creation for confirmation of use in the student's NDSU program.

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 for information on exceptions to this graduate credit transfer policy.

To be considered, transfer credits:

- must carry only grades of A or B on a 4.0 scale
- must have been earned within a 7-year period at the time of the final examination
- must be graduate level
- must not be a continuing education, correspondence, extension, or workshop course

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- must not be internship, individual study, special problem (equivalent to NDSU's 696/796 Special Topics credits), or research courses, or courses graded Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
- must not have been used to fulfill the requirements of a baccalaureate degree
- must be verified by an official transcript
- will not be used in calculation of the grade point average