

General Policies

Enrollment Policy

Students must maintain continuous enrollment by registering for at least one graduate credit during fall and spring semester until all degree requirements are completed. If applicable, this includes the Graduate College approval of the master's paper, thesis, or dissertation.

- Registration is required for students completing the preliminary or final examinations during the summer semester.
- Students may take up to 15 credits each semester. Students wanting to exceed the credit limit must submit the Over 15 Credit Petition (https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/current_students/forms/#:~:text=Over%2015%20Credits%20Petition) form.
- A student who has not registered for longer than a continuous two-year period must reapply for admission and is subject to the degree requirements at the time of readmission
- For information regarding assistantships and enrollment see <https://catalog.ndsu.edu/graduate/graduate-school-policies/graduate-assistantship-policy/> (<https://catalog.ndsu.edu/past-bulletin-archive/2025-2026/graduate/graduate-school-policies/graduate-assistantship-policy/>)
- In some circumstances, graduate assistants who are working 20 hours per week and registered for five or more graduate credits may be considered full-time. Check with your lender, funding provider or other organization to determine their specific requirements.

See Credit Load page (<https://catalog.ndsu.edu/past-bulletin-archive/2025-2026/academic-policies/student-credit-load/>) for more information.

Enrollment Requirements for International Graduate Students

Each fall and spring term, international graduate students (those holding an F-1 or J-1 visa) must fully enroll in face-to-face coursework. If an international student holds a graduate assistantship contract, full-time enrollment is 6 credits minimum. For those students without an assistantship contract, full-time enrollment is 9 credits minimum. Exceptions to these minimum enrollment requirement may be made on a case-by-case basis with pre-approval from both the Graduate School and the International Student and Study Abroad Services office. Failure to comply with the minimum enrollment requirements will result in the loss of legal status as an F-1 or J-1 student visa holder. See the International Student and Study Abroad Services page (<https://www.ndsu.edu/international/iss/immigration/students/credits/>) for additional information.

Coursework Completion Deadlines

- Coursework, including transfer credit, more than seven years old cannot be used to satisfy the requirements of any certificate or master's degree. Current students or students returning within the seven year timeframe may petition for an exception to this policy for NDSU coursework only. The petition for exception is limited to one extension of at most one (1) calendar year. The exception must be approved by the student's advisor, the graduate program coordinator, and the Graduate College.
- Coursework, including transfer credit, more than ten years old cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements of any doctoral degree. Current students or students returning within the ten year timeframe may petition for an exception to this policy for NDSU coursework only. The petition for exception is limited to one extension of at most two (2) calendar years. The exception must be approved by the student's advisor, the graduate program coordinator, and the Graduate College.

Master's Paper, Thesis, or Dissertation Completion Deadlines

The student will have one year from the date of the final examination to complete the Graduate College format review process and any other outstanding degree requirements.

If all degree requirements are not completed within one year the student must repeat the final examination. If a period of time two years or greater lapses before the master's paper, thesis or dissertation is approved by the Graduate College, the student must reapply to the Graduate College, redefend the disquisition and register for a minimum of two credits.

Graduate College Leave of Absence

Students may file a Request for Leave of Absence (<https://powerforms.docusign.net/dfe263d9-611c-4814-a1ef-14376c97f7e8/?env=na3&acct=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-%20d64cf8f1c2d7&accountId=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7>) from their graduate program for up to two years. Forms must be received by the Graduate College prior to the Enrollment Census date and can only be submitted if the student is not enrolled or has withdrawn to zero credits (<https://www.ndsu.edu/onestop/withdrawing-classes/>) (see Dates and Deadlines (<https://www.ndsu.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/>) for details).

Filing a Request for Leave of Absence ensures that you will not need to register for semesters in which leave was approved. To re-enroll (within the two- year limit), submit the Request for Reactivation (<https://powerforms.docusign.net/8e0410f1-3331-4b61-a369-85780b99e512/?env=na3&acct=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7&accountId=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7>). Any approved leave of absence does not amend the seven- or ten-year coursework completion deadline.

Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment and fail to file for a leave of absence with the Graduate College must submit the Request for Reactivation (<https://powerforms.docusign.net/8e0410f1-3331-4b61-a369-85780b99e512/?env=na3&acct=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655->

d64cf8f1c2d7&accountId=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7) form and enroll in at least one credit per missed semester (fall and spring) up to four credits.