

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, including any qualifying transfer credits (see transfer credit policy below).

- 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.
- up to 10 credits taken as a non-degree NDSU graduate student can be used towards the degree
- 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.
- 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 and filed by the student, the supervisory committee, the graduate program coordinator, and 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 (<https://catalog.ndsu.edu/past-bulletin-archive/2025-2026/graduate/graduate-school-policies/>)
- 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 (<https://catalog.ndsu.edu/past-bulletin-archive/2025-2026/graduate/graduate-school-policies/>)
- 2-4 credits of 797 Master's Paper

Plan C Master's Degree

- Minimum 30 credits total

Course Waivers or Substitutions

Course waivers or substitutions may be made with the Waive/Substitute Course eForm. This is an advisor initiated form. Students do not have access to this form.

Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit is requested at the time a Plan of Study or a [Waive/Substitute Course eForm](#) is filed. 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.*

Concurrent Master's Degrees

A student may be allowed to work at satisfying the requirements of two graduate degrees concurrently. A maximum of 10 graduate credits of course work can be applied to both programs of study as approved by all members of both supervisory committees, the two program administrators, and the Graduate College. A student pursuing multiple graduate degrees must:

- Apply and be accepted to both degree programs
- File a plan of study for each program
- Complete all academic program requirements
- Complete all Graduate College requirements
- Maintain continuous enrollment in each program
- Successfully complete the master's thesis, paper, or culminating experience for each degree program
 - If each program requires a master's paper, thesis, or culminating work, they must differ substantially and must result from substantial work completed independently in each discipline.
- Successfully complete any final defense as required for each program

Master's Degree with Two Major Areas

A student may pursue one master's degree with two major areas. Such a program must have the concurrent recommendation of the administrators of the two programs. The Plan of Study shall clearly delineate the course work required for each major area.

- A minimum of 40 credit hours are required, including at least 14 graduate course credits in each of the two major areas.
- No more than 10 of the required 40 credits shall be research credits under the Plan A masters, while no more than four of the required 40 credits shall be paper credits under the Plan B master's.
- The student is required to conduct interdisciplinary scholarly work culminating in one master's paper or thesis acceptable in both major areas.