DEPARTMENT OF LAND RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Montana State University

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Information for graduate students enrolled in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences at Montana State University

http://landresources.montana.edu

September 2014

NOTE: THE MSU BULLETIN, GRADUATE CATALOG AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL HAVE PRECEDENCE OVER THIS PUBLICATION RELATIVE TO OFFICIAL PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES.

The Graduate School website may be found at

http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/
## Fall Semester 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| Aug 21 8:30 am - noon | New Graduate Student Orientation, mandatory, Leon Johnson 339  
Leon Johnson 339: New Graduate Student Orientation (invitations by email in July) Continental breakfast from 8:30-9:30 a.m. followed by lectures starting at 9:30 a.m.  |
| Aug 22 8:30 am - noon | GTA Orientation, Leon Johnson 346  
(For GTAs teaching this semester who have not previously attended a GTA orientation or are not already taking an intensive GTA training within their own program)  
Leon Johnson 346: New Graduate Teaching Orientation. Continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m. followed by lectures starting at 8:45 a.m.  |
| Aug 25 | Classes begin. 1-credit extension deadline  
Last day for non-degree applications to be submitted |
| Sept 1 | Labor Day (no classes; offices closed) |
| Sept 20 | Last day for graduate students to file "Application for Advanced Degree" |
| Oct 1 | Last day for international applications for spring semester (if this is different than your department, follow your department's date) |
| Nov 17 | Last day for master's comprehensive or doctoral final examination |
| Nov 17 | Last day for approval of thesis, dissertation, or professional paper (if professional paper is submitted to the library) by formatting advisor. |
| Nov 26-28 | Thanksgiving holiday (no classes; offices closed) |
| Dec 5 | Last day of classes |
| Dec 8-12 | Final examinations |
| Dec 12 | Fall semester ends. Last day to withdraw application for advanced degree |
| Dec 13 | Commencement |

## Spring Semester 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>New Graduate Student Orientation 8:30 -noon. Lunch 12-1:30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| TBD      | Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Orientation (mandatory for all GTAs teaching this semester who have not previously attended the GTA orientation)  
1:30-4:30 |
| Jan 14   | Classes begin. 1-credit extension deadline  
Last day for non-degree applications to be submitted |
<p>| Jan 19   | Martin Luther King holiday (no classes; offices closed) |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>Last day for international applications for summer semester (if this is different than your department, follow your department's date)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Last day for graduate students to file &quot;Application for Advanced Degree&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>President's Day holiday (no classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 9-13</td>
<td>Spring Break (no classes), Offices Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>University Day holiday (no classes); Offices open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>Last day for master's comprehensive or doctoral examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>Last day for approval of thesis, dissertation, or professional paper (if professional paper is submitted to the library) by formatting advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4-8</td>
<td>Final Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>Spring Semester ends. Last day to withdraw application for advanced degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
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**Summer Session 2015**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Last day for international applications for fall semester (if this is different than your department, follow your department's date)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>First 6 week and 12 week sessions, classes begin. 1-credit extension deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Memorial Day holiday (no classes; offices closed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Last day for graduate students to file &quot;Application for Advanced Degree&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>Independence Day holiday observed (no classes; offices closed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Last day for master's comprehensive or doctoral examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Last day for approval of thesis, dissertation, or professional paper (if professional paper is submitted to the library) by formatting advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 7</td>
<td>Last day of semester. Classes end for 12 week and second 6 week, Last day to withdraw application for advanced degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences (LRES) at Montana State University offers graduate programs leading to an M.S. degree in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences, an M.S. in Land Rehabilitation and a Ph.D. in Ecology and Environmental Sciences. Specialization within each area depends upon the student’s interest and availability of financial support for interested students. LRES also participates in the cross-departmental M.S. in Entomology. LRES graduate students enrolled in the Entomology M.S. degree program will be expected to follow the guidelines in this booklet.

The purpose of the graduate program is to provide students with the opportunity to focus and extend their knowledge in a subject matter field as well as to develop their capability for critical thinking, originality in research and depth of academic training. The information contained in this booklet has been assembled for the convenience of graduate students and advisors in LRES. This booklet should be used in concert with the MSU Bulletin and information on The Graduate School website. Graduate students and advisors are expected to become thoroughly familiar with the regulations of this booklet and those of The Graduate School. Failure to follow these regulations and observe the degree requirements invariably results in complications and often delays progress in completing the chosen degree.

It is the student’s responsibility to meet all deadlines regarding their graduate program. Deadlines may change from time to time. Check with The Graduate School and the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator for updated information.

Graduate students on formal appointment and receiving an assistantship stipend are considered full-time research assistants (GRA) or teaching assistants (GTA) in the department. These appointments represent an agreement between the student and department with each party having a responsibility in the arrangement. GRA’s generally devote about one-half time to class studies and one-half time to a research project under the guidance of a faculty Major Advisor over the course of the appointment. GTA’s generally devote about one-half time to teaching responsibilities and about one-half time to class studies during the academic year. Research responsibilities occur throughout the year, but are the predominant activities during the summer months. The time devoted to these activities will vary between student programs, but students will devote their full and concerted efforts toward completion of their program. The period of appointment is considered to be one of academic growth and professional development. Students are on duty in the Department on a regular basis each working day except for holidays or approved leave periods. Inherent in the graduate student training program is an expectation that students will devote long hours, often substantially in excess of a typical work week, toward degree completion. Indebtedness to the research project and the Department is not satisfied until the thesis and graduation are accomplished and appropriate publications are completed.

Students seeking admission to graduate status in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences must hold a B.S. or M.S. degree and have a record of appropriate scholarship in areas closely related to land resources and environmental sciences. They are expected to present evidence of college level training and mastery in biology, chemistry and mathematics sufficient to provide a good background for further study at the advanced level.
Students with deficiencies may be required to take background courses to makeup these deficiencies before or after being approved for acceptance. GRE exams are to be taken before applying for admittance and are part of the required application materials. The Educational Testing Service must forward an official copy of the score directly to The Graduate School. A TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 550 for the paper based test, 213 for the computer based test and 80 for the internet-based test is required for international students whose first language is not English. English proficiency exam scores are not required if English is the first official language of the applicant's country of citizenship or if the applicant has received an undergraduate or graduate degree from an institution in the United States. A GPA of 3.0 for the last two years, three letters of recommendation and a letter of application describing the applicant's research interests and career goals in pursuing graduate training are minimum requirements for acceptance to the LRES graduate program. No foreign language credits are required by LRES for the M.S. or Ph.D. degrees.

Students in the Land Rehabilitation M.S. program are eligible for the WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education) tuition waiver. Students who have accepted WICHE support MAY NOT change to the M.S. program in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences unless and until they repay the entirety of their previous WICHE support. All policies listed in the MSU Bulletin, Graduate Catalog and in this booklet apply to all graduate degree candidates in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences.

NOTE: All graduate forms must be REVIEWED, TYPED and PROCESSED BY THE LRES ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COORDINATOR before submission to The Graduate School.
APPOINTMENTS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

All new graduate students are required to attend a departmental orientation with the Department Head and LRES staff which will be held at the beginning of the semester.

Assistantships

When students are appointed to an assistantship, this implies that the assistantship will continue contingent on satisfactory student performance and availability of funds for the time periods stated in the paragraph below. Exceptions to appointments are included in the hire letter offering the assistantship.

Assistantships are awarded as a means of providing financial assistance so students can make steady progress toward completion of a degree. Students on assistantship do not qualify for additional remuneration. They are expected to complete degree requirements within a reasonable time frame depending upon the nature of their programs. Students on assistantships are expected to complete an M.S. degree in 2 to 2½ years and the Ph.D. degree in 3 to 4 years. A Graduate Assistant Agreement Form must be completed before a student can be placed on an assistantship. Graduate Students may work (through any combination of payroll types) at Residence Life, University Food Services, ASMSU Tutoring, or apply for classified, professional or adjunct positions with no restrictions. For this type of employment, a Graduate Student Authorization Form must be submitted with approval from the student’s advisor and The Graduate School.

Graduate students appointed as Graduate Teaching or Research Assistants may not be employed for more than 20 hours per week cumulatively for all forms of employment on campus. All campus employment of graduate students must be approved through The Graduate School.

Currently, the Department Head allocates university-funded in-state and/or out-of-state tuition waivers to GTA’s and GRA’s. In general, GTA’s have priority in these assignments. The majority of GRA programs are funded by research grants and contracts awarded to individual LRES faculty. Fees and/or tuition may be paid by a research grant or contract, if approved by the major advisor and granting agency.

Domestic students are encouraged to obtain residency status as soon as possible. Contact the Registrar’s Office in Montana Hall for full details on policies regarding residency.

Major Advisor/Graduate Committee Chairperson

The major advisor is the primary contact for each graduate student and assists the student in all matters related to graduate study.

The major advisor has responsibility to be familiar with and to uphold LRES and MSU standards for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees and to provide excellent mentorship to graduate students under their supervision, consistent with departmental goals and expectations.
Only tenurable LRES faculty may serve as the major advisor/graduate committee chairperson for LRES graduate students. Non-tenurable LRES faculty on courtesy appointments (e.g., Research and Affiliate faculty), or tenurable faculty from other MSU departments, may co-chair LRES graduate committees with a tenurable LRES faculty member upon approval of the LRES Department Head. The major advisor must be selected by the middle of the second term in residence.

Duties of the major advisor include:
- Assigns graduate students to their research/teaching programs.
- Assists in selecting the student's graduate advisory committee.
- Initiates the thesis proposal and initial meeting with the graduate advisory committee.
- Helps determine the student's program of study (required courses) in consultation with the student and the graduate committee.
- Monitors student progress and conducts annual reviews.
- Administers comprehensive, defense-of-thesis and final examinations.
- Reviews program change requests.
- Ensures program rigor.
- Helps arrange for the student to gain teaching experience.
- Monitors student progress toward degree completion and adherence to the time schedule for meeting Department and The Graduate School requirements.

Graduate Committee

The major advisor and graduate advisory committee share responsibility for overseeing the student's needs and progress. The graduate committee members are selected by the student and major advisor on the basis of their qualifications to directly assist in the student's thesis research program. Appropriate disciplinary representation should be present on the committee, consistent with the specific research project.

At least three of the five appointed members of a Ph.D. committee and two to three members of an M.S. committee (which may be composed of three to five members) must be full-time tenurable faculty at MSU (as opposed to emeritus/research/adjunct/affiliate faculty or non-academic experts).

Committee members not holding faculty status at MSU must submit documentation of their qualifications, including current vita, to the Department Head prior to approval. The proposed committee membership is submitted and approved by the Department Head then submitted to The Graduate School as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the second semester for M.S. students or by the end of the third semester for Ph.D. students. Committee composition may subsequently be modified as needed but must remain within the guidelines above.

Graduate Program of Study and Committee Form

The course program is planned by students in close collaboration with the major advisor and graduate committee, and is submitted to the Department Head, followed by The Graduate
School, no later than the end of the second (M.S.) or the third (Ph.D.) term. A deficiency identification exam may be given at the discretion of the major advisor and graduate committee. The goal of the exam is to help identify areas of course work or disciplinary deficiency to assist in designing an appropriate plan of study. The members of the graduate committee (including the graduate representative on doctoral committees) must initial the original typed copy of the program form before it is submitted to the Department Head. The program may later be altered as needed, subject to department and The Graduate School approval. Any changes may be requested before or during the term affected. Final changes must be made at least one month prior to the end of the term in which degree requirements will be completed. See “Guidelines and Instructions for Completing the Master’s and Ph.D. Program of Study and Committee Form” in the appendix for Graduate School requirements.)

Students receiving tuition waiver or having tuition/fees paid from a grant normally will register for a minimum of nine (9) credits per semester. EXCEPTION: Those students working toward residency status must register for no more than six (6) credits per term for the first 12 months in attendance.

Completion of the thesis research requirement will be verified by the graduate committee and the major advisor following the outcome of the final defense of thesis examination. M.S. degree students in the department are expected to pursue a “Plan A” option (thesis). If a “Plan B” option (professional paper) is desired, this must be communicated to the major advisor prior to the initiation of the graduate program. Students are not allowed to change from Plan A to Plan B except in the event of remarkable circumstances beyond the control of the student. Such a change must be approved in writing by the student’s graduate committee and the Department Head.

Application for Advanced Degree

An Application for Advanced Degree must be submitted the semester of graduation to the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator in time to allow for completion and auditing. It is forwarded to The Graduate School on or before the specified deadline. If you do not complete the requirements during the term specified, the previous application must be withdrawn and a new application form must be submitted to the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator to forward to The Graduate School by the applicable deadline. Thus, the student and major advisor should carefully plan the timing of program completion and filing the application for advanced degree. If the thesis/dissertation is submitted after the published deadline and the student is currently registered for three credits, the student may choose to make all corrections/changes before the first day of the following academic term and be eligible for a one-credit registration the following term (instead of the mandatory three credit registration the term of graduation). Students who choose and are eligible for this option will be certified to graduate the following term. If more time is needed beyond the first day of the following term, the student will be required to register for at least three credits to be eligible for graduation that term.

Thesis Proposal

Thesis topics are to be chosen so they are in harmony with the research project with which the student is associated. Students should develop, as soon as possible, with their major
advisor for consideration by the graduate advisory committee, a complete, comprehensive, and workable thesis research proposal. This proposal should provide an appropriate title, a synopsis of the current literature or lack of it, a statement of what is to be researched, why the research is important relative to that already done, proposed research methods, and a proposed time line for completion.

Minimum content guidelines include:

Title - Journal title style
Objectives - one-half page
Justification - one paragraph
Literature Review - about three pages
Materials/Methods - one to two pages
Expected contribution to existing knowledge - one-half page
Time line and metrics

Greater detail and/or length may be required by the major advisor and/or graduate advisory committee.

Thesis

General Guidelines for Electronic Theses or Dissertations may be found on The Graduate School website http://www.montana.edu/wwwetd/ and is to be followed by the student and major advisor during the preparation of the thesis/dissertation and its approval by The Graduate School.

Thesis grading is Pass/Fail. Full-time students who are doing thesis work should register for an average course load of 9-12 credits per semester. This can be accomplished by adding thesis credits each semester around course credits to bring the total up to near the average figure. Thesis preparation must follow The Graduate School guidelines. Make certain that all names and titles in the acknowledgments and on the signature page are accurate and spelled correctly. Typing and other costs are the degree candidate's responsibility. The departmental copier may be used to make copies of the EXAMINATION DRAFT for the graduate advisory committee in preparation for the defense-of-thesis. All other duplicating costs of the thesis, including those after the defense, are the responsibility of the degree candidate; departmental copiers may not be used. If more than four copies of the examination draft are required, costs of duplicating extra copies will be paid by the student or project. Students are responsible for the proper distribution of final thesis copies, including one copy required for the LRES archives and one for the major advisor. Any changes in thesis format from those in the "Guide" must have prior approval from The Graduate School.

The Title Pages requiring original signatures should be brought to the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator. At that time, the Signature Approval Form will be added and all forms will be routed to the Department Head for inspection and signature. The LRES archive thesis copy is bound. If you have other copies that you would like to have bound, they should be brought to the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator at which time you may select cover and lettering colors. Single-sided copies are preferred. There is a moderate charge for binding, paid by the student or advisor. The Certificate of Approval Form for Theses and Dissertations must be typed
by the graduate student and signed by the student, chair and committee members to be submitted to The Graduate School with an electronic copy of their thesis.

A graduate student can expect the draft of the thesis to be returned from the major advisor and graduate committee reviews within two weeks of the time submitted. A draft version of the thesis must be reviewed and given tentative approval by all members of the graduate committee before an examination copy is prepared and the final exam scheduled.

Completion of the thesis research requirement will be verified by the graduate committee and the major advisor following the outcome of the final examination.

**Examinations and Defense of Thesis/Dissertation**

Refer to the MSU Bulletin or Graduate Catalog regarding all dates to meet graduation deadlines. After the thesis has been read by the full committee, the final examination can be scheduled. Adhering to MSU GRADUATE CATALOG regulations, the examination copy for the thesis defense is to be given to all committee members (and to the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator for Ph.D.) at least one week before the examination.

The M.S. final examination will be both comprehensive, to test breadth and depth of knowledge, and a defense-of-thesis (see MSU Graduate Catalog for full details). Students should discuss with the major advisor how this exam will be handled, so they may appropriately prepare for it.

Comprehensive examinations (see the online MSU Graduate Catalog for full details) for the Ph.D. degree are both written and oral. The written phase precedes the oral exam by no more than one month and is scheduled when the candidate and major advisor agree that the student is ready. The comprehensive examination must be taken by the end of the second year of the student’s program. The written exam must be completed within a period of one week. Questions are prepared by the candidate’s graduate committee, with additional questions solicited from other staff members if the major advisor desires. Grading is on a Pass/Fail basis. The committee has final authority, with no more than a single dissenting vote required for passing the comprehensive examination.

The final examination for the Ph.D. degree, which cannot occur until at least six months after passing the written and oral comprehensive examinations, is primarily a dissertation defense, but may also include additional questions within the broad scope of the student’s discipline. A Public Thesis/Dissertation Defense seminar is required for all M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. The defense seminar shall present results included in the draft thesis submitted to the graduate advisory committee for review and may not take place until the draft thesis has been presented to the student’s graduate committee for approval.

*Once the date has been set, contact the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator at least two weeks before the date for the thesis/dissertation defense.*

A notice to all departmental faculty and graduate students announcing the final exam and its location will be circulated by the LRES Main Office one week before the final exam date.
(Again, contact LRES Academic Programs Coordinator – students are NOT to prepare notices
on their own). The Graduate School must be notified of the defense seminar so it can be
posted on the website. LRES faculty are encouraged to attend all final exams, but action
relative to the candidate’s achievement rests solely with the graduate advisory committee
and the Department Head. An open seminar (30-40 minutes) covering the results of the
thesis research is presented to attendees prior to the beginning of the thesis defense. The
thesis in final form will be approved by the major advisor, graduate committee, the LRES
Department Head and the Dean of The Graduate School.

Expectation for Publication

Publication of the thesis research results in a research journal is expected; thus, the thesis
research should be conducted with publication beyond the thesis in mind. Authors are
encouraged to write in a manner that requires the least rewriting for a publication format and
still meets the requirements of The Graduate School’s guidelines
(http://www.montana.edu/etd/index.html). The student will prepare the journal manuscript(s)
and submit to their major advisor. Publication guidelines are available from each major
society or journal which describe correct format and requirements. If publication is not
accomplished within one year after graduation, the advisor will be expected to publish the work
as senior author.

Duties and Expectations

All graduate appointments are awarded with the understanding that the student will be
involved in departmental research activities as an integral part of their academic program and
training. They are to become familiar with and obtain a complete working knowledge of
their chosen major area of study. Graduate students learn by assisting their major advisor in
undertaking and completing research. An important part of the research process involves
publishing results in a format that is readily accessible to others and thereby adds to the body
of scientific knowledge. Funded graduate students are explicitly expected to publish their
research in scientific journals, if the work is deemed appropriate for publication by the major
advisor. This is true even if funding has ended before the work has been converted to
manuscript form and submitted.

All students, regardless of funding source, are expected to gain instructional experience
through assisting with teaching in an LRES or other approved lecture or laboratory course. This
activity may or may not provide added financial compensation. Students completing the
teaching assistance requirement will typically be involved about 15 hours per week in teaching
activities in addition to their own research and course work. This time requirement will vary
with specific courses and activities, number of graduate assistants participating, etc. Students
should explore potential opportunities with their advisor and with other LRES faculty well in
advance of their anticipated service.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a continuous process and is constantly being done by the major advisor,
graduate committee, department head, and LRES faculty. Unsatisfactory student progress
Exit Process

Students are to arrange for an exit interview with the Department Head before leaving campus. An exit interview may also be required with the Vice Provost of The Graduate School. Also, departing students should give the MSU Human Services and LRES Academic Programs Coordinator a forwarding address before leaving the campus. In the event a student has obtained employment, you should give the following information to the LRES Academic Programs Coordinator for the annual Career Services Survey: Name of Company, Address, Position Title, and Yearly Salary. Any early departures should be arranged with the major advisor and Department Head as soon as possible when a change is anticipated.

Grievances

If such cases arise, these are referred to the major advisor, the LRES Graduate Affairs committee, and/or the Department Head, respectively.

Graduate Program Overview Committee

Many aspects of the LRES Graduate Program fall under the authority of the LRES Graduate Curriculum Committee.

Department Head

The Department Head serves multiple functions relative to graduate students and programs. Among these are oversight and approval of proposed graduate programs and associated forms, and ensuring that the quality and standards of the departmental M.S. and Ph.D. programs are upheld and maintained.

The Department Head also serves as an advocate for LRES graduate students, and as a mediator of any disputes or difficulties encountered by graduate students that cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the student’s major advisor or graduate advisory committee. Students are encouraged to contact the Department Head before any such difficulties become exacerbated and/or prolonged.
APPENDIX: Sample Forms
The Graduate School  
(406) 994-4145 www.montana.edu/gradschool

**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

### Graduate Program of Study & Committee

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle/Maiden</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<td>City</td>
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<th>E-Mail:</th>
<th>Degree Select: in</th>
<th>Degree Title</th>
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Please list all degrees you currently hold (include both undergraduate and graduate degrees):

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<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Date Conferred</th>
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**My signature is an acknowledgement of service on this committee and it certifies that the student’s coursework on this Program of Study meets the minimum requirements for the degree at Montana State University.**

**Graduate Committee Appointment: If the committee includes a co-chair, please indicate on line #2.**

1. Name (please print) (Chair) | Signature | Date | E-Mail
2. Name (please print) | Signature | Date | E-Mail
3. Name (please print) | Signature | Date | E-Mail
4. Name (please print) | Signature | Date | E-Mail
5. Name (please print) | Signature | Date | E-Mail
6. Name (please print) Graduate Representative | Signature | Date | E-Mail

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<tr>
<th>Department Head</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>The Graduate School</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Student Signature* | Date

* Please note: a one-time $50 processing fee will be charged to your student account upon approval of this form.

Office Use Only:

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Revised 9/2014
Indicate degree requirements by checking all that apply:
- Master’s Qualifying Exam
- Master’s Comprehensive Exam
- Master’s Defense of Thesis
- Doctoral Qualifying Exam
- Doctoral Written Exam
- Doctoral Oral Exam
- Doctoral Defense of Dissertation

4xx-Level Graded Coursework: List all 4xx-level courses to be completed at MSU after admission to the degree program. Up to 9 credits at the 4xx-level are allowed on a graduate Program of Study. Prohibited courses included: 494/400, 492/470, 498/476, 588 and 589.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of credits each term</th>
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Subtotal Graded Coursework

5xx and 6xx-Level Graded Coursework: List all 5xx and 6xx-level courses to be completed at MSU after admission to degree program. The total number of 5xx and 6xx-level course credits must be at least 2/3 of the total coursework, including Research Credits: 590, 690 or 575.

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<th>Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal Graded Coursework

Transfer/Non-Degree/Reserved Credits: List all courses to be transferred from another institution, taken as a non-degree graduate or reserved as an undergraduate. A combined total of 9 credits with a grade of B or better may be applied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T/N/R Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of credits each term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal Graded Transfer Coursework

Committee Chair’s initials _________

Revised 9/2014
Student Name/ID#: __________________________

Research Credits:
Professional Paper/Project (575), Master’s Thesis (590), Doctoral Dissertation (690), or Scholarly Paper/Project (675)
☐ Plan A: Thesis or Dissertation  ☐ Plan B: Professional Paper/Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of credits each term</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal Research Credits __________

TOTAL CREDIT HOURS __________

List any courses required by the department that do not count towards degree requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of credits each term</th>
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</table>

Master’s Degree credits to be considered toward the Doctoral Degree: A maximum of 30 credits from the master’s degree may be used. Thesis (590) and Professional Paper/Project Credits (575) cannot be considered/counted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric &amp; Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of credits each term</th>
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Total Master’s Degree credits to be considered toward the Doctoral Degree __________

Committee Chair’s initials __________

Revised 3/2014
Guidelines and Instructions for Completing the Master's Program of Study & Committee Form

A student's Program of Study is a contract created between the student and the committee members that is approved by the department head. This contract establishes the requirements that the student must meet in order to earn a Master's degree from Montana State University.

The Graduate School takes great pride in helping to ensure the quality and integrity of the graduate programs at MSU. The following is a set of instructions and requirements to aid in the process of properly filling out a Program of Study. Please read them carefully. (A more comprehensive description of these policies may be found at www.montana.edu/gradschool.

As always, please feel free to contact The Graduate School office directly with any questions.

Personal information Section:
• Complete with the most current and complete contact information.
• Use only your MSU student ID number. Please do not use your social security number.
• The degree you are seeking and the degree title must be filled in.

Committee members Section:
• As a master's student, you must have a minimum of 3 members on your committee. The chair (also known as your major advisor) of your Graduate Committee must be a tenure track (or tenured) faculty member within your department at MSU and the person with whom you will be working with the closest.
• The majority of your committee should be from your department. All committee members must sign and date the form.
• Please attach vitae for all off-campus committee members or faculty affiliates (adjunct faculty, research faculty etc.)
• The department head must also sign to acknowledge the appropriateness of your Program of Study and committee.

Policy and Deadlines:
Master's Programs of Study must be completed by the end of the second semester of registration. (First semester submission is required for one year degrees.)
• Course work may not be more than 6 years old at the time of graduation.
• Transfer credits: a maximum of 9 credits are allowed and cannot be approved without an official transcript from the previous University(s).
• Non-Degree/Reserved credits: a maximum of 9 credits allowed.

PLEASE NOTE: The combination of transfer credits, reserved credits, & non-degree credits may not exceed more than 1/3 of the credits on your Program of Study.
• Pass/Fail: A maximum of 3 credits allowed.
• 594(500), 592(570), 598(576): May not exceed 1/3 of total credits required for degree.
• 570: A maximum of 4 credits for plan "A", 6 credits for plan "B".

10/09/2013
• 4XX level courses may be used on a Program of Study: a maximum of 9 credits are allowed
• PLEASE NOTE: 494(400), 492(470), 498 (476), 482(489), 588, & 589 courses are not allowed on the Program of Study
• 3XX level courses are not allowed on the program of study.
• Grade Performance on Program of Study: Grades below “C-“must be repeated.
• “I” grades must be resolved before graduation.
• 3 credits minimum registration is required during the term of comprehensive exams, defense of thesis, and graduation.
• Continuous enrollment (minimum of 3 credits) becomes mandatory once all coursework on the Program of Study is completed or any portion of the comprehensive exam has been taken.

**Graded Coursework Section:**

• A minimum of 30 credits is required to earn a master’s degree.
• For “Plan A” students, 10 thesis credits and 20 coursework credits (9 of which can be at the 4XX level) are required.
• For Plan B students, the number of 5XX level course credits must be at least 2/3 of total graded coursework, excluding Research credits (590) or Professional Paper credits (574, 575).
• Please list in this section only graded courses used to fulfill degree requirements completed or to be completed at MSU as a degree seeking student at Montana State University.
• Designate how many credits you plan to take for each course in the appropriate semester box you plan to take it.
• Pass/Fail courses, seminars, independent study 592’s (570), practicum, and internship credits should be listed in this section.

**Transfer/ Non-Degree/Reserved Credits:**

Please list in this section all graduate credits taken as a Non-Degree Graduate at MSU or at another accredited institution that you wish to apply to your degree program.
You may transfer up to 9 graduate level credits taken at an accredited institution as a graduate student.
A maximum of 9 non-degree credits may be applied towards your degree requirements.
A maximum of 9 reserved credits may be applied towards your degree requirements.
PLEASE NOTE: The combination of transfer credits, reserved credits, & non-degree credits may not exceed more than 1/3 of your program and must be a grade of “B” or better.

**Research Credits:**

• List all research credits here. 10 thesis credits (590) may be included on a Plan “A” program, and a maximum of 6 professional paper/project credits (575) may be included on a Plan “B” program.
When listing research credits, you do not need to lay out each semester you intend to take them unless your Committee requires it.

**Departmental Requirements:**

• Departments may require additional coursework towards your degree that is not part of your Program of Study (i.e. 3xx courses, additional seminars or 592’s (570), etc.). List all such coursework here.

10/09/2013
Guidelines and Instructions for Completing the Doctoral Program of Study & Committee Form

A student's Program of Study is a contract created between the student and the committee members that is approved by the department head. This contract establishes the requirements that the student must meet in order to earn a Doctoral degree from Montana State University.

The Graduate School takes great pride in helping to ensure the quality and integrity of the graduate programs at MSU. The following is a set of instructions and requirements to aid in the process of properly filling out a Program of Study. Please read them carefully. A more comprehensive description of these policies may be found at www.montana.edu/gradschool.

As always, please feel free to contact The Graduate School office directly with any questions.

**Personal information Section:**
- Complete with the most current and complete contact information.
- Use only your MSU student ID number. Please do not use your social security number.
- The degree you are seeking and the degree title must be filled in.

**Committee members Section:**
- As a doctoral student, you must have a minimum of 4 members on your committee. The chair (also known as your major advisor) of your Graduate Committee must be a tenure track (or tenured) faculty member within your department at MSU and the person with whom you will be working with the closest.
- The majority of your committee should be from your department. All committee members must sign and date the form.
- Please attach vitas for all off-campus committee members or faculty affiliates (adjunct faculty, research faculty etc.)
- The department head must also sign to acknowledge the appropriateness of your Program of Study and committee.
- A graduate representative will be appointed by The Graduate School at the time the Program of Study is approved. The "grad rep" is a tenured or tenure track professor outside of the degree granting department and will be notified via email of their appointment. Their sole responsibility is to monitor and ensure the integrity of the comprehensive exam and the defense of dissertation.

**Policy and Deadlines:**
Doctoral Programs of Study must be completed by the end of the third semester of registration.
- Course work may not be more than 10 years old at the time of graduation.
- Transfer credits: a maximum of 9 credits are allowed and cannot be approved without an official transcript from the previous University(s).
- Non-Degree/Reserved credits: a maximum of 9 credits allowed.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The combination of transfer credits, reserved credits, & non-degree credits may not exceed more than 1/3 of the credits on your Program of Study.
- Pass/Fail: A maximum of 9 credits allowed.
- 594(500), 592(570), 593(576): May not exceed 1/3 of total credits required for degree.
• 592(570): A maximum of 6 credits may apply.
• 4XX level courses may be used on a Program of Study: a maximum of 9 credits are allowed
• PLEASE NOTE: 494(400), 492(470), 498(476), 482(489), 588, & 589 courses are not allowed on the Program of Study
• 3XX level courses are not allowed on the program of study.
• Grade Performance on Program of Study: Grades below “C-” must be repeated.
• “I” grades must be resolved before graduation.
• 3 credits minimum registration is required during the term of comprehensive exams, defense of thesis, and graduation.
• Continuous enrollment (minimum of 3 credits) becomes mandatory once all coursework on the Program of Study is completed or any portion of the comprehensive exam has been taken.

**Graded Coursework Section:**
• A minimum of 60 credits (30 of which can be counted from a Master’s degree) is required to earn a doctoral degree.
• Please list in this section only graded courses used to fulfill degree requirements completed or to be completed at MSU as a degree seeking student at Montana State University.
• Designate how many credits you plan to take for each course in the appropriate semester box you plan to take it.
• Pass/Fail courses, seminars, independent study 592’s(570), practicum, and internship credits should be listed in this section.

**Transfer/ Non-Degree/Reserved Credits:**
Please list in this section all graduate credits taken as a Non-Degree Graduate at MSU or at another accredited institution that you wish to apply to your degree program.
You may transfer up to 9 graduate level credits taken at an accredited institution as a graduate student.
A maximum of 9 non-degree credits may be applied towards your degree requirements.
A maximum of 9 reserved credits may be applied towards your degree requirements.
PLEASE NOTE: The combination of transfer credits, reserved credits, & non-degree credits may not exceed more than 1/3 of your program and must be a grade of B or better.

**Research Credits:**
• List all research credits here. A minimum of 18 dissertation credits (690’s) must be taken; 14 dissertation credits are required for an Ed.D.

When listing research credits, you do not need to lay out each semester you intend to take them unless your Committee requires it.

**Departmental Requirements:**
• Departments may require additional coursework towards your degree that is not part of your Program of Study (i.e. 3xx courses, additional seminars or 592’s(570), etc.). List all such coursework here.
**Graduate Program Change**

Date __________  Student ID __________

Last Name __________  First Name __________  Middle/Maiden __________  Phone Number __________

E-Mail: ___________________  Degree __________  in ___________________  Degree Title ___________________

This form is used to change a graduate student’s program of study that has previously been approved on the Graduate Program of Study & Committee form. Programs may change from time to time as the scheduling and/or availability of courses change or as a student’s research emphasis shifts. Once a program of study has been approved, courses do not need to be added unless other courses are removed and the total credits or distribution of credits no longer meets the minimum requirements of The Graduate School. Courses may not be removed from a program of study once a grade has been received in that course.

---

**Remove:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Crs #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
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</table>

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**Add:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Crs #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
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**Approval:**

Committee Chair __________  Date __________  Head of Major Department __________  Date __________

Student Signature __________  Date __________  The Graduate School __________  Date __________

Revised 07/2013
The Graduate School
(406)994-4145 www.montana.edu/gradschool

Graduate Committee Revision Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle Name</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

E-Mail       Degree       In
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Degree Title

This form is used to revise a graduate student's committee that was previously approved on the Graduate Program of Study & Committee Form. Committees may change as faculty change or as a student's research emphasis shifts. Committees should not be changed simply to accommodate short term scheduling issues.

Please list committee members in the same order they appear on the Graduate Program of Study & Committee Form. State the reason for the requested revision(s) on the line number corresponding to the committee member's name. Ensure that both the person(s) being removed and/or being added to the committee initial next to their name indicating their concurrence.

---

Original Committee Member(s):

1. Name (Chair)  Date
   E-mail

2. Name        Date
   E-mail

3. Name        Date
   E-mail

4. Name        Date
   E-mail

5. Name        Date
   E-mail

6. Name (The Graduate School Representative – PhD Committees Only)

---

Revised Committee Member(s):

1. Name (Chair)  Date
   E-mail

2. Name        Date
   E-mail

3. Name        Date
   E-mail

4. Name        Date
   E-mail

5. Name        Date
   E-mail

6. Name
   E-mail

---

Reasons for Committee Revision(s):

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

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Committee Approval:

Head of Major Department  Date  The Graduate School  Date

Student  Date

CommitteeRevision.doc revised 01/2011
Application for Advanced Degree

Application Deadline: Completed Applications for Advanced Degree are due to The Graduate School on or before Sept. 20th for Fall Semester, Feb 5th for Spring Semester, and June 10th for Summer Semester. A $20.00 audit fee will be assessed to the student’s account each semester an application is submitted (this fee must be paid through the Student Accounts Office). A one time $30.00 commencement fee will be charged to your account the first time you apply to graduate. The commencement fee is for degree seeking students only.

Diploma Information: Diplomas will be issued under the name listed on the student’s permanent record. Please verify your name and diploma mailing address with the Office of the Registrar. Diploma mailing dates vary with each semester; please contact the Office of the Registrar to find out when to expect your diploma in the mail. Certificate students do not receive a diploma.

Commencement Ceremony: Please contact the Office of the Registrar for information on Spring Commencement.
(degree seeking students only)

FOR CANDIDATE

Full Legal Name ___________________________ Student ID# ___________________________

E-mail Address _________________________________

Mailing Address ________________________________ Street P.O. Box ________ City ________ State ________ Zip ________

Phone Number _________________________________

☐ Check here if you are utilizing the One Credit Extension

I hereby apply for the degree of ___________________________ in ___________________________

Degree/Certificate Title

To be awarded in: ☐ August ________ ☐ Dec. ________ ☐ May ________

(year) (year) (year)

Candidate’s Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

FOR CHAIR (Approval)

The student’s graduate Program of Study and related requirements are completed or in progress. I have reviewed and completed the checklist on the reverse of this form with the above stated student.

Advisor’s Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

FOR THE GRADUATE SCHOOL (Review)

The Graduate School ___________________________ Date ________________

For Office use Only: Courses in Progress Deficiencies/Action Required

revised July 2012
Certificate of Approval Form for Theses and Dissertations

This form serves as the official record of thesis/dissertation submission to The Graduate School. This form is not included in the thesis or dissertation.

The information provided below should INCLUDE THE SAME INFORMATION approved on the title page of your thesis/dissertation. TYPE this information for legibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Semester &amp; Year of Graduation</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author's First Name</td>
<td>Author's Middle Name</td>
<td>Author's Last Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Type</td>
<td>Degree program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Department</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>--Select one--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keywords or Phrases concerning subject of thesis/dissertation (Separated by commas, 256 character max)

Student Agreement:
1. I hereby certify that, if appropriate, I have obtained and attached hereto a written permission statement from the owner(s) of each third party copyrighted matter to be included in my thesis, dissertation, or project, allowing distribution as specified below.
2. I certify that the version I submitted is the same as the final copy approved by my advisory committee.
3. I hereby grant to MSU and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my thesis, dissertation, or project in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis, dissertation, or project. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of the thesis, dissertation, or project.

Student and Committee Agreement (select one of the following):
- 1. Release the entire work, which includes any supplementary material, immediately for access worldwide.
- 2. Secure the entire work, which includes any supplementary material, for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of one year. At the end of the one year secure period, the work will be handled under option 1 above.

Review and Acceptance:
The aforementioned document has been reviewed and approved to meet the thesis, dissertation, or project requirement by the student's supervisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above, and confirm that this Approval Form serves as the Certificate of Approval for the thesis, dissertation or project including any abstract enclosed within.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student (please print)</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair Name (please print)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Co-Chair (please print)</td>
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<td>Committee member (please print)</td>
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<td>Committee member (please print)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Revised 8/11
THESIS BINDING ORDER FORM

DATE: 

Thesis Received
Thesis Sent
Bound Thesis Rcvd
Graduate Called

ORDERED BY:

Name (as wanted on cover )
Address
Phone/E-Mail

ORDER:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of copies</th>
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<th>lettering color</th>
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<td>LRES LIBRARY</td>
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<td>Major Advisor</td>
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TOTAL COPIES: ____

I have reviewed and agree with this order. __________________________

Signature of graduate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Admission</strong></td>
<td>Discuss admissions with department of interest and apply online through The Graduate School.</td>
<td>To occur by the end of the 2nd term of registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate Program of Study and Committee</strong></td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair and Committee; submit form to The Graduate School.</td>
<td>Must be submitted to The Graduate School before the end of the 2nd term of registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifying Examination</strong></td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair to form committee.</td>
<td>The examination generally occurs during the 1st year of attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Examination</strong></td>
<td>An approved form results in a Grad Prog of Study Filing fee of $30.</td>
<td>The examination usually occurs when at least 2/3 of the required coursework has been completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintain Continuous Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>Must be enrolled in 3 or more credits each term, excluding summer.</td>
<td>After passing any portion of the comprehensive examination (Plan A) or after completion of required coursework (Plan B). Must be submitted on or before the 3rd Friday of the intended term of graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application to Graduate</strong></td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair and Committee.</td>
<td>The examination usually occurs when at least 2/3 of the required coursework has been completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defense of Thesis (Plan A)</strong></td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair; submit form to The Graduate School.</td>
<td>After passing any portion of the comprehensive examination (Plan A) or after completion of required coursework (Plan B). Must be submitted on or before the 3rd Friday of the intended term of graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defense of Thesis (Plan B)</strong></td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair and Committee.</td>
<td>The examination usually occurs when at least 2/3 of the required coursework has been completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approval of Thesis (Plan A)</strong></td>
<td>Approval by the Graduate Dean and Graduate School.</td>
<td>Must be approved at least 14 business days before the end of the intended term of graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation Commencement</strong></td>
<td>See Registrar's Office for details.</td>
<td>December ceremony — summer and fall candidates only. May ceremony — spring candidates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This guide is general information for master's students. Reference your department's graduate handbook and The Graduate School policy for specific requirements and deadlines.
Degree Requirements - Masters

5.3 Masters Requirements

General Credit Requirements

- All master's candidates are expected to be familiar with both The Graduate School and their specific academic college and department degree requirements.
- The minimum credit requirement for master's degrees is thirty (30) credits; individual degree programs may require more.
- Only those courses listed on an approved graduate Program of Study are applicable toward graduate degree credit requirements.
- In all non-thesis programs, a minimum of thirty (30) credits (or more as determined by the department) must be for coursework and not thesis credits.
- See Minimum Enrollment.

Special Requirements

- Conversion of thesis credits to professional paper credits: If a master's student changes from a thesis plan to a professional paper/project plan, a maximum of six (6) credits of thesis (department rubric 590) may be converted to six (6) credits of Professional Paper (department rubric 575). Students wishing to make this change must submit a Graduate Program Change form to the Graduate School.
- Conversion of professional paper credits to thesis credits: Professional paper credits cannot be converted to thesis credits.

Plan A: Thesis

This is a research-oriented master's degree. In other professions, the master's is a necessary step to the doctorate.

Thesis Requirements

A thesis, written by the student seeking the degree and based on original research, is a requirement for all thesis (Plan A) master's degree programs.

Committee Composition—A master's committee is comprised of a minimum of three (3) members who guide the thesis. A tenured or tenure-track faculty member serves as the chairperson of the student's graduate committee. See Committee

Submission of the Final Thesis—The thesis must be submitted in final form to The Graduate School by the published deadlines (no later than fourteen (14) working days before the end of the term in which graduate work is completed.)

Thesis (590) Credits—

- Ten (10) thesis credits must be completed successfully for thesis plan programs. An unlimited number of 590 credits may be taken. However, only ten (10) 590 credits count
toward degree requirements along with a minimum of twenty (20) content coursework credits.

Note: A department may require more than thirty (30) credits for degree completion.

- If a student is using faculty time or university facilities to work on their thesis, they must be registered for thesis credits.
- 590 credits are pass/fail.

Conversion of Thesis Credits to Professional Paper Credits

Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD)

The thesis must meet all formatting requirements set forth by the Graduate School. Final authority for approval or denial of a thesis rests with the Graduate Dean.

See Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD)

Plan B: Professional Paper/Project

For students in professional or terminal degree programs, a professional paper or project is required.

Professional Paper/project (575) Credits—

- A maximum of six (6) professional paper/project credits can be taken. See department for how many can be counted toward professional paper/project degree requirements.
- If a student is using faculty time or university facilities to work on their professional paper/project, they must be registered for 575 credits.
- 575 credits can be graded or pass/fail. See department requirements.

Conversion of Professional Paper Credits to Thesis Credits

Plan C: Coursework Only

This option is generally for students who prefer a structured coursework format, but is not offered by all departments. See Degree Programs. A minimum of thirty (30) approved coursework credits is required.

Master’s Committee

This committee advises the student on academic matters and is the examining committee for the master’s comprehensive and/or thesis defense examinations.

Committee Chair—A tenured or tenure-track faculty member serves as the chair of the student’s graduate committee and acts as a channel of communication within the degree-granting department. In the event that the student does not select a chair of their graduate committee within the first (1st) term of attendance as a master’s student, the department head will appoint a temporary advisor. This advisor will advise the student until a tenured or tenure-track faculty member is selected as the graduate committee chair.
Committee Composition—A master’s committee is comprised of a minimum of three (3) MSU faculty members. The majority of the committee should be made up of faculty from the degree-granting department, but due to the interdisciplinary nature of many degrees, is not limited to the degree-granting department. The graduate committee chair and the department head recommend the committee composition to The Graduate School. Final approval of committee composition rests with The Graduate School. See Graduate Program of Study & Committee or Committee Revision forms.

Non-tenure-track Committee Members—Committee members not holding tenured or tenure-track faculty status at MSU must submit documentation of their qualifications, including a vita and a letter of recommendation from the student’s department head to The Graduate School. In some cases, these committee members may act as co-chairs of a student's committee.

Changes to the Committee—The student may make changes to their committee composition, using the Graduate Committee Revision form. Changes may not be made due to examination scheduling problems.

Committee Appointment Deadline—The committee composition must be submitted to The Graduate School by the end of the student’s second (2nd) term of graduate attendance. See Graduate Program of Study & Committee form. See Fees & Holds.

Program of Study

The program of study acts as a contract between the student, the department, the college, The Graduate School, and the University. The program of study, jointly developed by the graduate committee and the student, defines the minimum requirements for the degree. Other requirements as determined by the student's graduate committee, also may be listed. Once a course is graded, it cannot be removed from a program of study. Courses applied toward one degree may not be used for another. Students may take classes beyond those listed on their program of study. Other requirements as determined by the student's graduate committee, also may be listed.

Program Approval—The program of study must be recommended by the student’s graduate committee chair and department head. Final approval rests with The Graduate School.

Note: Approval comes with a fee. See Fees & Holds.

Filing Deadlines—The program of study must be submitted on an official Graduate Program of Study & Committee form to The Graduate School by the end of the student's second (2nd) term of graduate attendance. A one-time fee is associated with the filing and approval of this form. See Fees & Holds. See Degree Requirements/General/Other Credits.

A student must have an approved, not just submitted, Program of Study and Committee form on file with The Graduate School prior to sitting for any portion of the comprehensive exam or defense.

Changes to the Program of Study—The program of study may be amended through the course of the student's graduate study. Changes to a student's program of study must be made through the Graduate Program Change form and recommended by the graduate committee chair and the department head. Final approval rests with The Graduate School. No fee is associated with this form.

Holds—See Fees & Holds.

Comprehensive Examination

The major department may administer a comprehensive examination. The form of this examination may be either or both oral and written sections. The purpose of this examination is to determine if
the student has attained sufficient mastery of their discipline. In Plan A, a comprehensive examination and thesis defense are required. These may be combined and offered simultaneously. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all committee members are available when scheduling an exam.

Note: Video Conferencing Policy.

Professional Licensure/Certification—Examinations for professional licensure or certification may not be used for, or in place of, the comprehensive examination.

Minimum Registration—The student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits at MSU during the term in which the examination is taken. If the student wishes to sit for the comprehensive examination during the time between terms, then the student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits in the term prior to or immediately following the time between terms.

Deadline—The last day to sit for the comprehensive examination is on or before the fourteenth (14th) business day prior to the end of the term the student intends to graduate.

Committee Representation—See Committee.

Grading—The comprehensive examination is graded with either a passing or failing grade determined by a majority vote of the student’s approved graduate committee.

Reporting the Results—The committee and department head are responsible for submitting written notice of the results of the comprehensive examination to the student and to The Graduate School no later than five (5) business days after the examination is held or after each section is administered. The Report on Comprehensive Exam/Thesis Defense is to be submitted to The Graduate School by the department, not the student.

Acceptable Age—The maximum time allowed between the comprehensive examination for Plan A students and degree completion is five (5) years.

Failed Examination—The student is allowed two (2) total attempts to pass the comprehensive examination. At least two (2) months must elapse before the second attempt at the examination. Failure to pass the second (2nd) attempt results in termination of graduate study and dismissal from the academic program. Students who are dismissed from the program due to a second (2nd) failed attempt are ineligible to reapply to the same degree program.

Defense of Thesis

In Plan A, the thesis defense examination is required. The student’s approved graduate committee carries out this examination. The student should have prepared and distributed a draft of the thesis to the committee at least fourteen (14) business days prior to date of defense.

Note: Video Conferencing Policy.

Minimum Registration—A student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits at MSU during the term in which the defense is held. If the student wishes to sit for the thesis defense during the time between terms, then the student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits in the term prior to or immediately following the time between terms.

Deadline—The last day to defend a thesis is on or before the fourteenth (14th) business day prior to the end of the term the student intends to graduate.

Committee Representation—See Committee
Invalid Defense—A thesis defense held in the absence of the chair of the student’s graduate committee will be considered invalid and the defense will have to be rescheduled.

Grading—The thesis defense is graded with either a passing or failing grade determined by a majority vote of the student’s approved graduate committee.

Reporting the Results—The graduate committee and department head are responsible for providing written notice of the results of the defense to the student and to The Graduate School no later than five (5) business days after the defense is held. The Report on Comprehensive Exam/Thesis Defense is to be submitted to The Graduate School by the department, not the student.

Failed Defense—The student is allowed two (2) total attempts to pass the defense. At least two (2) months must elapse before the second (2nd) attempt takes place. Failure to successfully pass the second attempt results in termination of graduate study and dismissal from the academic program. Students who are dismissed from the program due to failure to pass the defense are ineligible to reapply to the same degree program.

Degree Requirements/General/Age of Courses

Special Courses
## Steps to Completing a Doctoral Degree

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<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<td>Admission</td>
<td>Discuss admissions with department of interest and apply online through The Graduate School (<a href="http://www.montana.edu/gradschool">www.montana.edu/gradschool</a>).</td>
<td>Per department deadlines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Committee</td>
<td>Consult with department advisor or research chair to form committee.</td>
<td>To occur by the end of the 3rd term of registration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Program of Study and Committee</td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair and Committee; submit form to The Graduate School (<a href="http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms">www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms</a>). An approved form results in a Grad Prog of Study Filing fee of $50.</td>
<td>Must be submitted to The Graduate School before the end of the 3rd term of registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying Examination</td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair and Committee to schedule.</td>
<td>The examination generally occurs during the 1st year of attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Examination</td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair and Committee.</td>
<td>The examination usually occurs when at least 2/3rds of the required coursework has been completed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain Continuous Enrollment</td>
<td>Must be enrolled in 3 or more credits each term, excluding summer.</td>
<td>After passing any portion of the comprehensive examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to Graduate</td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair; submit form to The Graduate School (<a href="http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms">www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms</a>). Form processing results in a Graduate Student Audit fee of $20 and a Graduation fee of $30.</td>
<td>Must be submitted on or before the 3rd Friday of the intended term of graduation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defense of Dissertation</td>
<td>Consult with Graduate Chair and Committee.</td>
<td>Must be passed at least 14 business days before the end of the intended term of graduation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approval of Dissertation</td>
<td>Approval by the Graduate Dean and Graduate School Formatting Advisor. See submission procedures (<a href="http://www.montana.edu/etd">www.montana.edu/etd</a>).</td>
<td>Must be approved at least 14 business days before the end of the intended term of graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Commencement</td>
<td>See Registrar’s Office (<a href="http://www.montana.edu/commencement">www.montana.edu/commencement</a>).</td>
<td>December ceremony — summer and fall candidates May ceremony — spring candidates</td>
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This guide is general information for doctoral students. Reference your department’s graduate handbook and The Graduate School policy for specific requirements and deadlines.
Degree Requirements - Doctoral

5.4 Doctoral Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.), Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) are awarded on evidence of a particular field of knowledge, the ability to carry out independent research, and to present the results of such research in a scholarly manner.

General Credit Requirements

- All doctoral students are expected to be familiar with both The Graduate School and their specific academic college and department degree requirements.
- All students earning a doctoral degree from MSU must complete a minimum of sixty (60) credit hours post-baccalaureate, of which eighteen (18) to twenty-eight (28) must be dissertation credits. The satisfactory completion of certain courses is stipulated by the department.
- Only those courses listed on an approved Graduate Program of Study are applicable toward graduate degree credit requirements.
- A maximum of thirty (30) credits from a previously earned master's degree (from MSU or another accredited University) may be applied toward the sixty (60) credit minimum required for the doctoral degree.
- Doctoral students who have previously earned a master's degree must take at least twelve (12) coursework credits and eighteen (18) to twenty-eight (28) dissertation (690) credits.
- Doctoral students without a master's degree must take thirty-two (32) to forty-two (42) coursework credits and eighteen (18) to twenty-eight (28) dissertation (690) credits.
- A minimum of thirty (30) credits applicable to the degree must be taken from MSU.
- See Minimum Enrollment

Special Requirements

- No dissertation is required for the Education Specialist degree (Ed.S.).
- The age of courses at time of graduation may not exceed seven (7) years for the Education Specialist degree (Ed.S.).

Doctoral Committee

The graduate committee advises the student on academic matters and is the examining committee for the oral and/or written doctoral comprehensive examination and dissertation defense.

Committee Chair—A tenured or tenure-track faculty member serves as the chair of the student's graduate committee and acts as a channel of communication within the degree-granting department. In the event that the student does not select a chair of their graduate committee within the third (3rd) term of attendance as a doctoral student, the department head will appoint a temporary advisor. This advisor will advise the student until a tenured or tenure-track faculty member is selected as chair of the graduate committee.

Committee Composition—A doctoral committee is comprised of a minimum of four (4) MSU faculty members. The majority of the committee should be made up of faculty from the degree-granting department, but due to the interdisciplinary nature of many degrees, is not limited to the degree-granting department. The graduate committee chair and the department head recommend the
The program of study acts as a contract between the student, the department, the college, The Graduate School, and the University. The program of study defines the minimum requirements for the degree. Approval of a program of study is a two-step process. The first step is the submission to The Graduate School and the second step is a review by the ODPC.

The graduate committee and the student together develop the Graduate Program of Study. Once a listed course is taken and graded, it cannot be removed from a program of study. Courses applied toward one degree may not be used for another. Exception: the graduate committee may recommend that up to thirty (30) credits obtained from a master’s degree can be applied to a doctoral degree.

Students may take classes beyond those listed on their program of study. Other requirements as determined by the student's graduate committee also may be listed.

Program Approval—The program of study must be recommended by the graduate committee chair and department head. Final approval rests with The Graduate School.

Note: Approval comes with a fee. See Fees & Holds.

Filing Deadlines—The program of study must be submitted on an official Program of Study & Committee form to The Graduate School by the end of the student’s third (3rd) semester of graduate attendance. A one-time fee is associated with the filing of this form. See Fees & Holds. See Requirements/General/Other Credits.

A student must have an approved Program of Study and Committee form on file with The Graduate School prior to sitting for any portion of the comprehensive examination or dissertation defense.

Changes to the Program of Study—The program of study may be amended through the course of the student’s graduate study. Changes to a student's program of study must be made through the Graduate Program Change form and recommended by the graduate committee chair and department head. Final approval rests with The Graduate School. No fee is associated with this form.

Holds—See Fees & Holds.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is the major academic examination during the doctoral study that assures that the student has attained sufficient mastery of their discipline. Some departments use the passing of the comprehensive examination as the qualifying examination that admits the doctoral student to candidacy. This examination is valid for five (5) years from the term of successful completion.

Note: See Video Conferencing Policy.

Written and Oral—The comprehensive examination requirements are department specific. In the case where a department has written and oral examinations, the graduate committee will determine if the student has passed or failed the requirements. A student must have an approved Graduate Program of Study & Committee form on file with The Graduate School prior to sitting for any portion of the comprehensive examination or dissertation defense. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all committee members, including the Graduate Representative, are available when scheduling the comprehensive examination.

Minimum Registration —The student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits at MSU during the term in which the examination is taken. If the student wishes to sit for the comprehensive examination during the time between terms, then the student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits in the term prior to or immediately following the time between terms.
Deadline—The last day to take the comprehensive examination is on or before the fourteenth (14th) business day prior to the end of the term the student intends to graduate.

Committee Representation—See Committee

Grading—The comprehensive examination is graded with either a passing or failing grade determined by a majority vote of the student’s approved graduate committee.

Reporting the Results—The graduate committee and department head are responsible for submitting written notice of the results of the comprehensive examination to the student and to The Graduate School no later than five (5) business days after the examination is held or after each section is administered. The Report on Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense is to be submitted to The Graduate School by the department, not the student.

Failed Examination—The student is allowed two (2) total attempts to pass the comprehensive examination. At least six (6) months must elapse before the second (2nd) attempt at the examination. Failure to pass the second (2nd) attempt results in termination of graduate study and dismissal from the academic program. Students who are dismissed from the program due to a second (2nd) failed attempt are ineligible to reapply to the same degree program.

Note: See Age of Defense.

Defense of Dissertation

All doctoral candidates must defend their dissertation, with the exception of Ed.S. candidates. The defense usually consists of a public presentation and an oral examination of the candidate’s research. The candidate must have an approved Graduate Program of Study & Committee form on file with The Graduate School prior to the defense of dissertation. The public is invited to the oral presentation of the defense. Following the public portion of the defense, the committee chair will excuse the public from the defense. The graduate committee then will examine the candidate’s knowledge of the research in depth.

Note: See Video Conferencing Policy.

Deadline—The last day to defend a dissertation is on or before the fourteenth (14th) business day prior to the end of the term the candidate intends to graduate.

Committee Representation—See Committee

Minimum Registration—The candidate must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits at MSU during the term in which the defense is held. If the candidate wishes to sit for the dissertation defense during the time between terms, then the student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits in the term prior to or immediately following the time between terms.

Notification of the Defense Date—Each member of the graduate committee must be given a minimum of seven (7) business days prior to the defense date to read the dissertation. The graduate committee chair should discourage a candidate from defending if the candidate is not adequately prepared.

Advertising the Defense—The candidate and the major department are responsible for submitting an announcement to the MSU calendar system https://www.montana.edu/calendar/public/at least seven (7) business days prior to the defense with the following information:

- candidate’s name,
- dissertation title,
- defense time and place, and
- dissertation location.
Invalid Defense—A dissertation defense held in the absence of the candidate’s graduate committee chair or graduate representative will be considered invalid and the defense will have to be rescheduled. The candidate should have prepared and distributed a draft of the thesis to the committee at least fourteen (14) business days prior to date of defense.

Grading—The dissertation defense is graded with either a passing or failing grade determined by a majority vote of the candidate’s approved graduate committee.

Reporting the Results—The graduate committee and department head are responsible for providing written notice of the results of the defense to the candidate and to The Graduate School no later than five (5) business days after the defense is held. The Report on Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense is to be submitted to The Graduate School by the department, not the candidate.

Failed Defense—The candidate is allowed two (2) total attempts to pass the defense. At least two (2) months must elapse before the second (2nd) attempt takes place. Failure to pass the second (2nd) attempt successfully results in termination of graduate study and dismissal from the academic program. Candidates who are dismissed from the program due to failure to pass the defense are ineligible to reapply to the same degree program.

Age of Defense—The dissertation defense must be conducted no later than five (5) years from the term of successful completion of the comprehensive examination.

Dissertation Requirements

A dissertation, written by the candidate seeking the degree and based on original research, is a requirement for all doctoral degree programs except for the Ed.S. degree. The final dissertation must be presented in an acceptable form. See Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD).

Dissertation (690) and Scholarly Project (675) Credits—

- Only eighteen (18) to twenty-eight (28) dissertation (690) credits are applicable to degree requirements. Fourteen (14) credits of dissertation (690) are required for Ed.D. candidates.
- DNP students must take DNP scholarly project (675) credits. See College of Nursing.
- If a candidate is using faculty time or university facilities to work on their dissertation, they must be registered for dissertation (690) credits.
- Dissertation credits are pass/fail.

Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD)

The dissertation must meet all formatting requirements set forth by The Graduate School. Final authority for approval or denial of a dissertation rests with the Graduate Dean.


Degree Requirements/General/Age of Courses

Special Courses
The Graduate School Organization Chart