

AO 20: Graduate Student Enrollment Requirements

20.1 Enrolling in Classes

Graduate students may register for classes only after being fully admitted to the University according to the guidelines of their program. A student who attends classes but does not officially register for the classes will not receive credit for them.

Graduate students returning from disqualification and those on academic warning must get approval from an advisor or the program director before registering for classes.

Students who do not begin attending a course at the start of the term may be administratively dropped. If a student does not complete and provide documentation of prerequisites, they may be administratively dropped from a course.

20.2 Continuous Enrollment

Graduate students must be enrolled in either: 1) three graduate-level credits per semester or 2) the minimum number of credits agreed to by the graduate program and the student before the beginning of the term. A student who does not maintain continuous enrollment may be disqualified from the program and their academic record closed.

The Office of the Registrar will notify graduate programs of students who are in danger of breaking continuous enrollment before the beginning of each term; programs will notify students before the beginning of the semester. The discontinuation notice will be issued at least 10 business days before the beginning of the semester and will inform the student that failure to register for the minimum number of credits violates the continuous enrollment requirement and will result in their disqualification. If the student does not register for the minimum number of required credits by the add/drop date for the semester, the student is disqualified from graduate studies at NS.

If a student is unable to enroll in the minimum number of credits, the student should apply for a leave of absence through their graduate program. The leave of absence form is submitted to the program director. If approved, it is routed to the dean for approval and then to the Registrar's Office for processing.

If a student does not submit a leave of absence form or return to the graduate program after the leave of absence has expired, they will be disqualified from the program and their academic record will be closed.

A student may request reinstatement. The reinstatement decision is at the discretion of the graduate program.

20.2.1 Catalog Rights

Graduate students who maintain continuous enrollment at NS may graduate based on the requirements of either (1) the catalog year they entered NS or (2) the catalog year they graduate.

An approved leave of absence is not considered an interruption in continuous enrollment, providing it does not exceed two consecutive semesters.

Disqualified students lose previously established catalog rights.

20.3 Academic Standards

1. Program requirements cannot be satisfied with a grade below C-. Individual programs may set stricter grade requirements.
2. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grades are used only in designated courses identified in the graduate catalog. Other graduate courses may not be taken with S/U grading.
3. Two-thirds of the minimum credits required for the degree program must be earned in courses offered by NS. The remaining credits may be approved transfer credits from other accredited institutions. Individual programs with discipline-specific accreditations will review transfer credits to ensure they meet accreditation requirements.
 - a. Individual programs may limit how old transfer credits may be at the time of admission and/or may require proficiency exams or other demonstrations of proficiency to accept transfer credits.
 - b. Individual programs with discipline-specific accreditations may require that transfer credits were earned under current accreditation standards.

20.4 Minimum GPA

Students should refer to the minimum grade and cumulative GPA requirements published by their graduate program. Latin honors (cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude) are not awarded to graduate students.

20.5 Credit Loads

Full-time enrollment for graduate students is nine semester credits; half-time enrollment is at least five credits. Graduate students cannot enroll in more than 15 credits in a single term without the approval of the program director (or designee).

20.6 Course Numbering

Courses numbered 500 and above are graduate-level courses. Eligible senior undergraduates may enroll in courses numbered 500-599 with permission of the program director (or designee). Courses numbered 600 and above are for graduate students only.

20.7 Undergraduate Courses as Prerequisites

Undergraduate courses taken as prerequisite requirements for admission to a graduate program cannot be included in the minimum number of units required for a graduate program.

20.8 Previous Graduate Coursework

Students may count up to 12 transfer graduate semester credits toward a graduate degree at NS. The credits must be from an accredited university, approved by the program director to count toward the degree, and no more than six years old when the student graduates. Students must have earned a B- or above in transfer courses. Undergraduate courses cannot satisfy graduate program requirements.

20.9 Residency

Two-thirds of the minimum credits required for the student's program must be earned in at NS, and the last two terms in the program must be completed in residence at the University. Specific programs may have additional requirements.

20.10 Course Substitutions

Substitutions will be reviewed and approved by the program director (or designee) on a case-by-case basis.

20.11 Thesis Grading

Students who complete a thesis may enroll in a thesis course that spans multiple terms. The course may be assigned a grade of In Progress (IP) until the thesis is completed and a final grade is assigned.

If a student enrolls in a thesis course and is passing but does not complete the thesis, a grade of Thesis Incomplete (INC) will be assigned for the final term of the course. This grade is assigned only to graduate students enrolled in a multiple-term thesis course.

20.12 Dual Degrees/Programs at NS

Students who finish a graduate degree at NS may be awarded another graduate degree when they finish the requirements for the second degree. Students cannot pursue multiple graduate degrees simultaneously unless approved by the directors of both programs.

The department housing the second program/degree will evaluate graduate credits and identify which coursework/credits can be applied to the second degree. Students may apply up to 12 credits from one graduate degree or program to a second graduate degree.

20.13 Time to Complete Degree

A student has a maximum of six calendar years to complete a graduate program at NS, beginning with the semester the student is admitted. The time-to-completion calendar restarts for students who are readmitted due to reinstatement.

Students who do not complete their degree within six years will be dropped from the program and must reapply, with evaluation of all graduate credits taken to date, and must pay the application fee. The program director will work with the Office of the Registrar to notify students they have been dropped from the program due to time-to-completion issues.

Students who are using NS resources during the six-year period, including faculty consultation, laboratories, library resources, or scheduling and completing final exams, must register for a minimum of three graduate credits per semester or the minimum number agreed to by the graduate program and the student prior to the beginning of the term.

20.14 Graduation

To graduate, students must apply for graduation by the date listed in the academic calendar. Graduation is not automatic upon completing requirements. Students must apply for graduation and complete the items described in this section. Assistance is available from the student's faculty advisor and the Office of the Registrar.

20.14.1 Applying for Graduation

Applying for graduation entitles students to an official evaluation of their progress toward meeting degree requirements. Students applying by the deadline may participate in the commencement ceremony. Walking at Commencement is not proof that a student has completed degree requirements. The application for graduation is available from the Office of the Registrar. Failure to apply by the deadline for the term when a student wishes to graduate may delay their graduation.

20.14.2 Commencement

Commencement is held each spring. Students who completed degree requirements the previous summer or fall terms are eligible to participate in the ceremony along with those who will complete their work in the spring or following summer term. Names of graduates who apply for graduation by the deadline will be included in the commencement program unless a student files a Withhold Directory Information (FERPA) form with the Registrar.

20.15 Program Accreditation

Graduate programs may pursue discipline- or industry-relevant accreditations, as appropriate. Students must comply with policies and meet requirements of accrediting agencies for their program.

20.16 Related Information

20.16.1 Revision History

- Approved by Dr. Tony Scinta on 7/28/2023 and President DeRionne Pollard on 9/13/2023.