

GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Information pertaining to the following definitions is provided in greater detail throughout the sections of this catalog.

589 Designated course number for professional development credit-bearing courses offered by Extended Campus. These credits do not count toward any degree at MSU Billings.

Accredited Institution - A college or university accredited by, or a candidate for accreditation from, one of the recognized regional accrediting commissions. Montana State University Billings is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. As such, all college-level coursework from institutions accredited by the following list of agencies will be received and applied toward associate or baccalaureate degrees as applicable to general education, major, minor, and elective requirements.

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Commission of Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
- WASC Senior College and University Commission

Admission Test Students intending to enroll in a graduate program at Montana State University Billings may need to take a standardized admission test as part of the admission requirements. The type of test which needs to be completed and the minimum score requirements necessary to gain admission depend on the specific program.

Advising A service provided by a graduate faculty member to guide students through career issues, academic questions, problems, and/or coursework to plan and complete a degree program.

Advisory Committee A committee consisting of at least three faculty members (at least two of which are graduate faculty) selected to assist graduate students electing the thesis or Interdisciplinary Studies options in a graduate program.

Clinic A clinic provides an opportunity for students to explore and develop advanced skills working with individuals in Human Services settings.

Comprehensive Examination Some programs require a student to pass an oral and/or written comprehensive examination before the degree can be awarded.

Concentration Courses with a specialized emphasis within a major and/or option.

Credit Hour/Semester Hour Normally one semester credit hour represents 60 minutes of classroom instruction each week for one semester. Credit in a laboratory, independent study, or internship may require a longer period. A three-credit class will meet for three 60-minute or two 90-minute sessions each week for the entire semester. A semester hour is the basis of college credit at Montana State University Billings. A semester hour is the credit received for passing a subject taken one hour a week for one semester. Laboratory courses require two or three hours a week for each semester hour of credit.

Financial Aid Financial aid is intended to assist students in financing their education. Forms of financial aid available at Montana State University Billings include: loans, work-study and part-time employment, graduate assistantships, teaching assistantships, fee waivers, and scholarships.

Full-Time Course Load For financial aid purposes, a full-time course load is defined as nine credits in a graduate degree, certification, licensure, or fifth-year program.

Full-Time Graduate Student A full-time graduate degree student at Montana State University Billings is defined as one carrying nine or more semester hours in a regular semester.

Graduate Assistant A graduate assistantship may include research, scholarly activity, professional service or assistance with some campus programs. Graduate assistants receive stipends and may be recommended for a partial tuition waiver each semester. A 10-15 hour weekly workload is expected. A student must take at least six credits to be eligible for an assistantship.

Graduate Courses Courses generally reserved for Graduate students and numbered at the 500 level and above.

Graduate Student A Graduate Student has earned a baccalaureate degree and is pursuing post-baccalaureate studies.

Human Subjects Research Protocol Research projects, including thesis work, involving human subjects must conform to Montana State University Billings human subject research protocol. Policy guidelines and protocol forms may be obtained from the Office of Grants & Sponsored Programs.

Independent Study Students enroll for independent study as a 591 course. Such study requires an application and involves tutorials, directed and independent readings, and research, as well as other individualized activities designed to involve students in a learning process to fit the needs of the chosen graduate program. Generally, independent study course credit is available only for students with an approved program plan. A maximum of six semester credits of independent study may be used on an approved program plan.

Internship An internship is a supervised arrangement, normally with an external agency or institution. A minimum of forty-five hours are to be spent on-site for every semester credit earned, some programs require more.

Interdisciplinary Study Option Formerly the Self-Designed Option, Interdisciplinary Studies allows students to design a unique program of graduate study to meet their specific interests or intentions within guidelines of the graduate programs at Montana State University Billings.

Normal Load A normal load (see also Full-Time Student) for a graduate student is 9 to 12 semester hours. Maximum load is 15 semester hours without special approval. Six hours is a normal load for any summer session. No more than 9 credits may be taken in a given time period during summer or 15 credits for all sessions combined.

Option An option is a defined series of courses within a degree program that prepares students for a specific branch of a profession. Options are found within degree programs broad enough to accommodate a variety of professional applications.

Oral Defense/Thesis Defense All students completing a thesis must schedule an oral defense of their research project with their project advisory committee no later than two weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the student intends to graduate. The oral defense is open to members of the Montana State University Billings community.

Professional Core All graduate degrees in the College of Education require that students take two courses designed to provide a common foundation for graduate study in specific disciplines within the field of education and human services.

Professional Practice Option A degree program in the College of Education that does not require a thesis.

Program A program is a unified, complementary series of courses or learning experiences that lead to a degree, certification, licensure, or endorsement. An option may be included within a program.

Program Plan of Study A plan prepared by a student which indicates all coursework the student expects to complete for a degree. It is developed in consultation with the student's advisor.

Prospectus Before a student begins a thesis, the student's advisory committee and the dean must approve a prospectus which outlines objective and procedures of the research project in which the student plans to engage.

Seminar A seminar engages a small group of students in advanced study concentrated on each student's original research or important recent advancements in a field. Seminars are organized under the direction of a faculty member.

Specialization A particular line of research or study restricted to a special branch or field of activity within a profession. In education, it involves the area or areas in which a student is certified to teach or to serve in supervisory roles.

Teaching Assistant A teaching assistant works with faculty in planning, delivering, and evaluating instruction. Teaching Assistants receive stipends, and teaching assistants may be recommended for a partial tuition waiver each semester. A 15 hour per week workload is expected. A student must take at least six credits to be eligible for an assistantship.

Thesis The thesis is a formal paper written to describe and report on the research program the student has completed. Students selecting the thesis alternative commit themselves to a program of research and are expected to demonstrate a certain claim or perspective in relation to the research evidence and professional literature on the subject.

Workshop A workshop is a highly practical, participatory course designed for advanced students or professionals in a discipline. It provides experience or instruction in a new technique, theory or development.