

GRADUATE PROGRAMS AND ADMISSIONS

Office of Graduate Studies

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The Office of Graduate Studies is the administrative center for graduate studies at Montana State University Billings. All applications for admission to the different graduate programs, petitions for exceptions to University regulations, and related paperwork are processed through this office. Information and applications regarding scholarships, fee waivers, and assistantships for graduate students are available through the Office of Graduate Studies.

After all required application materials have been received, students who are accepted will be assigned an academic advisor.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Graduate Studies Office is to advocate for students and faculty so as to foster and sustain an environment of academic excellence through strong commitment to promote graduate education, research, creative activity, and collaborative endeavors.

- Serves as the administrative center for graduate studies: handling student files from application through graduation, providing information on financial aid and responding to all inquiries and requests for information.
- Furnishes educational and career counseling and information to new, returning, transfer, and non-degree graduate students.
- Provides service and support to graduate programs for recruiting, marketing, research, and creative endeavors.
- Provides service, support, and information to students, faculty, staff, and other constituents.
- Assists programs and the Graduate Committee in developing and implementing admissions and graduate policies.

Montana State University Billings Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee, appointed by the Academic Senate, consists of two graduate faculty members from each college offering graduate program(s) and one graduate student, selected by ASMSUB. Deans from each college with a graduate program and the Director of Graduate Studies serve on the committee as ex-officio members. The Graduate Committee is responsible for serving as a curriculum review body for graduate programs, for developing policies related to the Graduate Program, for recommending membership on the graduate faculty, for acting on post-baccalaureate student petitions for deviations from policies, and for advising the Director of Graduate Studies on all aspects of graduate studies.

Accreditation Statement

MSU Billings is institutionally 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

Students who transfer credit from institutions not accredited by the agencies in the above list (excluding foreign institutions) will not be accepted for transfer. Policy and procedure information may be obtained from the Registrar's Office.

Students transferring from institutions in pre-approval status must earn at least 20 credits at MSU Billings with a minimum 2.0 institutional GPA before their credits from the former institution will be considered for acceptance.

International coursework (except from institutions where English is the language of instruction) may require evaluation by a foreign credential evaluation company.

Graduate Degree Programs

The graduate programs of study at Montana State University Billings are centered on the activities of educating, serving, and communicating. Montana State University Billings is committed to ensuring that all its graduate students complement the theoretical study of a subject matter with personal investigation and practical application. A research course is required in all degree programs.

Program Admission Requirements for Master's Degree

Complete details of admission requirements for each Master's Degree are found in the pages of the College offering the degree. The tables below provides a quick checklist of requirements.

College of Education

M.Ed. = Master of Education including M.Ed. Curriculum & Instruction, Interdisciplinary Studies, School Counseling, Reading

M.S.S.Ed. = Master of Science in Special Education including Advanced Studies Option Applied Behavior Analysis Emphasis, Advanced Studies Option Special Education Emphasis, Generalist Option

Requirements	M. Ed. Curr. & Instruc.	M. Ed. Interdisc. Studies	M. Ed. School Cnsl.	M. Ed. All others	M.S.S.E.
Standardized Exam	no	yes	waived if GPA 3.0 or better	waived if GPA 3.0 or better	waived if GPA 3.0 or better
Admission Essay/Letter of Interest	no	no	yes	no	yes

Resume/Vita	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Letters of Reference	no	no	yes, 4	no	yes, 2
Criminal Background Check	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Exit Requirement	PRAXIS	PRAXIS	PRAXIS, School Counseling	PRAXIS	PRAXIS, Special Education

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

M.S. Psyc. = Master of Science in Psychology

M.S.P.R. = Master of Science in Public Relations

Requirements	M.S.P.R.	M.S. Psyc
Standardized Exam	yes	waived if GPA 3.0 or better
Admission Essay/Letter of Interest	yes	yes
Resume/Vita	yes	yes
Letters of Reference	yes, 3	yes, 3
Criminal Background Check	no	no
Application Deadline		April 15
Exit Requirement	comprehensive exam	

College of Health Professions and Science

M.H.A. = Master of Health Administration

M.S.A.T. = Master of Science in Athletic Training

M.S.C.R.M.H.C. = Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling

Requirements	M.H.A.	M.S.A.T.	M.S.C.R.M.H.C.
Standardized Exam	no	waived if GPA 3.0 or better	waived if GPA 3.0 or better
Admission Essay/Letter of Interest	yes	yes	yes
Resume/Vita	yes	no	yes
Letters of Reference	yes, 3	yes, 3	yes, 3
Criminal Background Check	no	yes	no
Interview	yes	yes	possible
Exit Requirement	capstone	research project or thesis	

Graduate Programs other than Master's Degree Programs

Second Master's Degree

A student may earn a second master's degree from Montana State University Billings.

A student seeking the second degree from Montana State University Billings must have earned the first master's degree at an institution accredited by a regional accrediting (p. 1) association.

Whether the first master's degree was earned at Montana State University Billings or at another accredited institution, students enrolling for a second master's degree may, where appropriate, count from the first master's degree a maximum of 12 semester (18 quarter) credits. Credits must meet the transfer credit rule of "B" (3.0) or higher.

A student enrolling for two master's degrees simultaneously will complete all requirements for both degrees, with the provision that **up to 9 semester credits** of professional core credits may be common to both degrees.

Courses common to multiple degree programs

The professional core courses are common for all degree programs in the College of Education. In addition, many courses are required for more than one degree program.

Those students interested in earning a second master's degree should examine the degree requirements outlined in the "Graduate Degree Programs" section of

this catalog to assess courses common to the degrees they are seeking. Students should also consult with their advisor regarding the procedures for earning a second master's degree.

Teacher Licensure

A post-baccalaureate student who returns to school to seek initial teacher licensure only may use either graduate or undergraduate courses to meet requirements. It is often to a student's advantage to take 500-level courses while seeking initial licensure because those courses may help advance the student on a school district pay scale and may often be used toward a graduate degree.

Acceptable courses in the plan for licensure may also be used simultaneously or subsequently on a master's degree plan so long as they contribute to the degree option chosen and fit within master's degree guidelines.

Those entering the graduate degree program and planning to teach, but are not yet licensed or whose license has lapsed, must complete the initial licensure requirements as either part of the master's degree plan or concurrent with it. The same advisor will work with the student on a plan for licensure as well as on the master's degree plan.

Endorsements

A teaching endorsement is an official notation applied to the Montana Educator License that defines the areas in which the holder of the license is qualified to teach or to serve in a professional service position in the public schools of Montana.

The graduate program at Montana State University Billings includes a Graduate Endorsement in School Counseling. The Supervisory Endorsement program at the post-master's level in Special Education is also available. Application for one of these programs must be made through the Office of Graduate Studies. Students in the post-baccalaureate licensure and endorsement programs are held to the same admission and satisfactory academic progress standards as those in the M.Ed. Curriculum & Instruction program.

General Admission Procedures for Graduate Students

An individual who is a graduate of an accredited college or university may apply for admission to Graduate Studies. MSU Billings Graduate Studies has a holistic graduate admissions policy that considers previous coursework, in-field work experience, and community involvement. For prospective candidates with a 3.0 undergraduate and graduate GPA or higher, admissions test scores are waived with the following exceptions: Master of Science in Public Relations, Master of Education in Interdisciplinary Studies. The online application link is available in the Application and Admission section of the MSU Billings Graduate Studies website (www.msubitillings.edu/grad/ (<http://www.msubitillings.edu/grad/>)). Paper applications are available upon request from the Office of Graduate Studies. Application materials not attached to the online application must be submitted directly to the Office of Graduate Studies.

A Montana State University Billings identification number will be assigned to all applicants at the time of application.

Note: Returning former Montana State University Billings students will fill out a Returning Montana State University Billings application. Returning students have an identification number.

For All Applicants

All applications must include the following:

1. a completed graduate student application form;
2. payment of a non-refundable application fee of \$40.00 (no application will be processed without the fee);
3. official transcripts reflecting all baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate work including degrees earned.

Some programs require additional items that may include:

1. admission test scores when required (a photocopy will suffice to accommodate the evaluation process but applicants must instruct the testing service to supply official copies);
2. a letter of intent or essay;
3. letters of recommendation;
4. a vita or resume.

In order for a student's graduate degree application to be reviewed for admission, all of the required documents must be submitted. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by programs and students will run the risk of not being admitted for the semester for which they are applying.

Graduate Application Fee

A \$40.00 nonrefundable application fee is assessed each person applying for admission to Montana State University Billings for the first time as a graduate student or to take graduate courses. The applicant has one calendar year from the semester of initial application to apply for readmission without paying an additional application fee.

Non-Degree Applicants

The applicant must complete an application form available in the Office of Graduate Studies or online. The completed form must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. A \$40.00 non-refundable application fee is required. Should a student change to degree seeking, this fee will be applied.

Application Deadlines

Most programs have continuous admission. However, applications that arrive close to the start of the semester may encounter problems with Financial Aid, closed courses, or full admission. The best way to avoid these issues is to apply as early as possible.

One program has a set deadline for applications.

Psychology: April 15th for fall admission

Admission Test Scores

Although the applicant may submit a copy of his/her admission test scores in the application packet, the applicant must request an official score report from the testing service to be sent directly to MSU Billings. Registration at MSUB will be withheld until an official test result is received if required by the degree/program.

A photocopy of the applicant's admission test scores will be accepted from another accredited academic institution in lieu of official exam scores only under the following circumstances:

1. the copy must be reproduced by an official of that institution on the institution's original letterhead stationary;
2. the copy must bear an original imprint of the institution's official stamp;
3. the copy must bear the original signature of a designated officer of the institution.

Minimum test scores for acceptance into specific graduate programs are determined by individual graduate programs.

General Guidelines

Admission decisions are made for each applicant individually by the program. Before admission is granted, each application is reviewed by the appropriate faculty, who determine if the applicant's academic history and preparation are satisfactory.

Students may be admitted with regular or provisional standing. Admission is subject to a favorable recommendation by the degree-granting program. Additionally, program directors reserve the right to grant an admission status other than full admission. Applicants should consider themselves admitted **only when official notification** has been received from the Office of Graduate Studies.

Regular Admission

Students must hold a four-year baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited (p. 1) institution, have demonstrated potential for graduate study, and have a 3.0 average (based on a 4 point scale) or better undergraduate cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA).

The student must have met all requirements of admission to Montana State University Billings as listed in the catalog. These include a complete application, official transcripts, admission test scores (if required), proof of immunization (if required), and any requirements of a specific program.

Provisional Admission

Applicants who do not meet the minimum MSUB academic standards with respect to GPA but show evidence in their other application materials that suggest the potential for graduate academic success may be given provisional admission status. This

status provides the academic program with an opportunity to further evaluate the applicant's potential for graduate work. Provisional requirements are set by each individual program and department. Students have a maximum of one academic year to satisfy the provisional admission conditions.

1. Provisional admission may be granted to a student when some type of deficiency is noted in the applicant's academic work, such as:
 - a. the applicant has a less than 3.0 cumulative GPA in undergraduate work;
 - b. the applicant has not met required admission test scores;
 - c. the program director, chair, or admission committee identifies other academic weaknesses that may adversely impact the applicants graduate career.
2. Provisional admission may be granted with up to fifteen (15) credits of deficiency coursework needed. The following stipulations apply:
 - a. The deficiency coursework must be listed *in writing* on the official acceptance letter from the Office of Graduate Studies. The acceptance letter will also state that the program may require additional prerequisites or deficiency work;
 - b. The program monitors acceptable progress of deficient coursework and ensures completion of such coursework;
 - c. The student must earn a "B" (3.0) on any post baccalaureate course.
3. Provisional status will be granted for one academic year. If deficiencies are not cleared within that time, the student will need to reapply to the program.

Petition to Consider Exemptions to Graduate Degree Program Admission Requirement(s)

Students who fail to meet the minimum GPA or test score requirements for admission to a graduate degree program may petition to consider exemption to the requirement(s). To appeal an admission requirement, the student must complete a Petition to Waive Graduate Admission Requirement form, available on the website (www.msubillings.edu/grad (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/>)). The student will complete the petition and return it to the Office of Graduate Studies. The petition will then be sent to the chair of the department of the College for review. When completed, the petition will be returned to the Office of Graduate Studies and the student will be notified if the requirement has been waived.

Non-Degree Graduate Status

General Criteria

Non-degree graduate students are those who have earned baccalaureate degrees and meet one of the following criteria:

1. do not wish to pursue graduate programs leading to an advanced degree at MSU Billings but wish to take courses;
2. have been denied regular or provisional admission;
3. have non-degree standing through the recommendation of a program;
4. whose formal degree applications are pending final action;
5. who applied too late to be admitted for the intended term.

Non-Degree Application Requirements

Non-degree seeking applicants must complete an application form available from the Office of Graduate Studies or online and submit to the Office of Graduate Studies.

All applications must include the following:

1. The completed application form
2. A \$40.00 non-refundable graduate application fee. (This will be applied should the student decide to pursue a graduate degree.)

Non-Degree Registration

New non-degree students will be eligible to register for classes as soon as the completed application is processed. This is generally 24 to 48 hours after receipt of the completed application.

A non-degree student may register for undergraduate or graduate level courses that are not restricted or above level. In such cases, students must contact the individual program for assistance in registering.

Non-degree graduate students are not eligible for graduate assistantships or financial aid.

Applicants who have never before attended MSU Billings must submit the following items to the Office of Admissions:

1. A completed Application for Admission to MSU Billings form (obtained from the Office of Admissions or the Office of Graduate Studies).
2. A nonrefundable \$40.00 admission fee.
3. Before enrolling for an initial term, all post-secondary students must comply with immunization requirements of ARM 37.114.701-721:
 - a. Students born in 1957 or later must provide evidence that they have received two measles and two rubella immunizations, with dose one administered at 12 months of age or later and dose two administered at least 28 days after dose one. No measles vaccination before 1967 is valid. No rubella vaccination before 1969 is valid. As an alternative, a student may supply a laboratory report from a CLIA approved laboratory indicating that the student is immune to measles and/or rubella.
 - b. Under ARM 37.114.711, the prospective pupil must receive a second dose of live measles and rubella vaccine before the beginning of the succeeding school term and no earlier than 28 days after administration of the first dose of measles and rubella vaccine.
 - c. A student may be exempt from the above requirements for medical reasons (ARM 37.114.715) providing the student supplies a statement from a physician (MD or DO) holding a license to practice in the United States or Canada stating:
 - i. The specific immunization that is contraindicated;
 - ii. The time period the immunization is contraindicated; and
 - iii. The reasons for the contraindication.
 - d. A student may be exempt from the above requirements for religious reasons providing the student supplies MT Department of Public Health and Human Services Form HES-113 that immunizations are contrary to the student's religious beliefs. This document must be submitted annually by any student claiming a religious exemption (ARM 37.114.716).

Special Graduate Admissions International Students

International students must meet all admission requirements of Montana State University Billings International Studies in addition to the following:

1. Complete the International Graduate Student Application.
2. Application Fee (\$40.00): Graduate applicants are required to send \$ 40 by money order, check, credit card, or wire transfer (cash is not encouraged). Please note that the application fee is non-refundable. Applicants will not be considered without the application fee.
3. English Proficiency Proof: Students from non-English speaking countries must provide evidence of proficiency in English by submitting an approved score from one of Montana State University Billings' approved English Proficiency tests. See list of approved English Proficiency tests below. Individual programs may have individual differences in how they weight these qualifications. Official

results should be sent to the Office of Admissions and the Office of Graduate Studies.

Provisional Admission: Applicants who do not have the required English language proficiency test score for full admission to Montana State University Billings but are academically qualified may be considered for admission through required attendance in the intensive English Language Program.

4. Successful completion of an undergraduate or graduate program at a college or university outside of the United States in which English is the language of administration and instruction. English must be used for all administrative functions and for all areas of instruction (with the exception of foreign language courses) including course lectures, materials, discussions, readings, and writing assignments. Applicants must submit an original official document from the undergraduate or graduate institution certifying that all of the administrative functions and instruction are conducted in English. The document must be signed by an officer of the institution and carry an official seal. The director of graduate studies and program chair will review the submitted documentation and inform the applicant if he or she has satisfied the English requirement.
 - a. If a student receives a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate from an institution in the U.S. or a country listed below, an English proficiency examination is not required and will be automatically waived.
 - i. Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Canada (except Quebec), Cayman Islands, Dominica, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Grenada, Guernsey, Guyana, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jamaica, Jersey, Liberia, Montserrat, New Zealand, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands, United Kingdom, United States Territories.
5. Certified copies of all certificates, degrees, and diplomas with a certified translation of the records.
6. An evaluated transcript from a credit evaluation service. All records of academic work completed outside of the United States or in non-English speaking countries must be submitted for a course by course evaluation to one of the following services: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) or Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE).
7. Letter of intent: Statement of degree objectives related to degree choice. Individual programs may require a more specific letter.
8. Resume
9. GRE score (see individual program requirements)
10. Three letters of recommendation
11. Copy of passport
12. For I-20 purposes:
 - a. Financial Statement: Complete the financial statement form and have it signed by a parent or sponsor. All future international students must attest that funds are available for full-time study at Montana State University Billings. The United States government requires international students to show proof of funds to at least cover the first year of study. An official letter from a banking institution showing the amount of funds available for the first year must accompany this form. The official letter must be in English.
 - b. Health History Form: All students are required to complete the health questionnaire and have it signed by a physician to verify immunization history.

International degree seeking application

Fall semester: June 1st

Spring semester: October 1st

Summer semester: February 1st

Montana State University Billings Approved English Language Proficiency Tests

TOEFL Minimum Required Score: 79 www.ets.org/toefl (<https://www.ets.org/toefl/>)

IELTS Minimum Required Score: 6.5 www.ielts.org/en-us (<https://www.ielts.org/en-us/>)

Duolingo Minimum Required Score: 100 englishtest.duolingo.com (<https://englishtest.duolingo.com/>)

iTEP Minimum Required Score: 3.5-3.9 www.itepexam.com (<https://www.itepexam.com/>)

PTE Minimum Required Score: 58 pearsonpte.com (<https://pearsonpte.com/>)

Senior Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate seniors at Montana State University Billings who are within one semester of completing all requirements for their undergraduate degree will be allowed to enroll for up to nine (9) semester credits at the 500 level. Undergraduate students are not permitted to enroll in courses numbered 600 and above.

Enrollment must be approved by the advisor, instructor of the course(s) and when appropriate by a financial aid officer. The student must complete the Application for Undergraduate Students to Take Graduate Level Classes (available on the website www.msubitings.edu/grad (<http://www.msubitings.edu/grad/>)). A student must have a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0 (based on a 4 point scale) in his/her major.

The above credit limit will not apply to students in a graduate 3+2 program. Students in such a program will be allowed to take the prescribed classes as the program has designed.

If a student takes graduate coursework as an undergraduate, those credits may be applied subsequently toward a graduate degree only if they are not used to meet undergraduate requirements for graduation.

Extension Credits

In order to take graduate level extension courses through Montana State University Billings and receive graduate credit, students must complete the following forms prior to the first class session:

1. Extension Credit Application form available from Extended Campus.
2. An Application for Admission to Graduate Study form if the student has not previously taken graduate courses for credit at Montana State University Billings. Using this form, the Office of Graduate Studies will assign all extension graduate students Graduate Non-degree Status.

Advisors and DegreeWorks Plans

After a prospective student has made application to Graduate Studies and has been admitted to a program, the student will be assigned an academic advisor.

Students should schedule an appointment with their advisor as soon as possible after being admitted. Students admitted to graduate studies in spring semesters should contact their academic advisors to set up an initial advising meeting before the end of spring semester. Students admitted to graduate studies during summers may need to check with the department chair/dean and/or the support staff in those offices on the availability of faculty advisors during the summer months, holidays, or other breaks from academic schedules. The student and advisor will develop the DegreeWorks Plan during the student's first semester of graduate work.

DegreeWorks guides the progress of the student toward the graduate degree. The specific required and elective courses the student must take to fulfill the requisites of the degree program are listed along with the semesters that each of these courses were taken and the grade received. Additionally, it denotes any courses transferred into the degree program that were approved by the advisor.

The student should meet regularly with his or her advisor to discuss any changes or additions to the Plan.

Western Regional Graduate Program

Montana State University Billings is a participant in the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Under the program, residents of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming are eligible for admission to designated graduate programs in the other 15 states at reduced rates. A number of high-quality, specialized programs at colleges and universities in these states have agreed to admit students from the other WICHE states for resident tuition rates; designated programs at private institutions are available for reduced tuition rates.

The Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling, Master of Science in Athletic Training, Master of Science Special Education Advanced Studies with Applied Behavioral Analysis, Master of Education Reading, and Master of Health Administration are the five programs at Montana State University Billings that have been approved as part of the WRGP. Students from qualifying states need to fill out an application for WICHE consideration. The application can be found on the Graduate Studies web page at www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>). Students receiving WICHE must maintain a 3.0 or better cumulative GPA each semester in order to maintain WICHE funding for the following year.

Please direct inquiries regarding the WRGP program to:
 Director of Graduate Studies
 Montana State University Billings
 1500 University Drive
 Billings, MT 59101-0298
 (406) 657-2238

Falsification of information

Each student is responsible for knowing and for complying with all regulations regarding admission procedures. Failure to be informed or to comply will not excuse a student from responsibility or from any penalty or difficulty that may be encountered.

Misrepresentation or falsification of a student's enrollment status will be sufficient grounds to cancel a student's current registration and to suspend the student for two semesters. It is the student's responsibility to know his/her enrollment status at his/her former institution(s).

Denial of Admission

Under Board of Regents' policy (301.10), Montana State University Billings "may deny or condition admission, re-admission, or continuing enrollment of any individual who, in the judgment of the unit, presents an unreasonable risk to the safety and welfare of the campus and persons thereon."

Registration Procedures

Directions and exact dates for pre-registration are issued each year in the Schedule of Courses found on the MSU Billings web page.

Late Registration

Students are expected to complete registration within the dates stated. For any delay beyond that period, unless University officials cause such a delay, a late registration fee of \$40.00 will be charged as stated in the General Bulletin. Students permitted to register late must pay the full fees. Students who fail to pay fees or fail to have their fee payment arranged before the final fee payment day will have their classes deleted for that semester.

Repeated Courses

When a course in which a student has previously attempted credit is repeated, the credit and the first grade received are canceled. The credit and second grade are recorded, even if the second grade is lower. Students must have the permission of their advisor before repeating any class and courses may be repeated only once.

Adding Courses

Students may add courses during the first seven instructional days of each semester. Students may add courses after the 7th instructional day and up to the 15th instructional day only with the approval of the instructor and the department chairperson.

Final Examinations

Final examinations are scheduled during the last week of each semester. A final examination schedule is published in the Schedule of Courses and a copy of the schedule is available at the Registrar's Office.

Culminating Experience

Each degree requires a culminating experience determined by the program that serves to demonstrate the candidate's proficiency in the field of study. The nature of the final requirement should be discussed with the program advisor early in the graduate program.

Withdrawal Procedures

Please refer to the "Student Fees" section regarding the University refund schedule and policy procedures for students withdrawing from either courses or Montana State University Billings.

Dropping a course

Withdrawal from a course (drop) is permitted through the 7th week, 35th class day of the semester. Withdrawal from a course is permitted through the 13th week and up until 10 class days from the official end of the semester with the approval of the student's academic advisor and course instructor. There is no penalty for failing work through the drop period. After the 13th week students may not drop courses, and the instructor will assign a letter grade other than a "W."

Withdrawal from the University

Students who withdraw from the University during a semester are required to fill out a withdrawal form and complete an exit interview in Advising and Career Services.

Students who officially withdraw from school for the current semester will receive a grade of "W" (Withdrew Passing) in all classes. Students who do not officially withdraw from classes will receive letter grades (other than a "W" grade) to be determined by the instructor of each class.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

All graduate students are expected to make systematic progress toward the completion of their degree. This progress includes satisfying the conditions listed below, and achieving the benchmarks and requirements set by the individual degree and non-degree programs. If a student fails to satisfy the requirements of the degree program and/or the benchmarks outlined below, the student may be suspended from his or her program.

1. Students must maintain a minimum 3.00 (3.25 for MSPR) GPA. If the GPA falls below 3.0 (3.25 MSPR) the student must develop with his/her advisor, an academic improvement plan (IP) that includes the conditions and timelines for making satisfactory academic progress in his/her program. Students will be placed on Academic Warning when the GPA falls below 3.0.
2. Students receiving two "F" grades will be suspended from their program regardless of cumulative GPA.
3. Students must successfully pass comprehensive exams, qualifying exams, culminating experiences, and oral defense of the thesis if required by their program.

Students failing to make satisfactory progress in their program, such as continuous enrollment or timely completion of incomplete grades, can be dismissed by the program. Students who do not attend for a two-year period without an official leave of absence will be withdrawn from the program. If they wish to return, they will need to reapply under the current rules in place for the program. Transfer credit rules will apply should they be readmitted to the program.

Continuous Enrollment

Once admitted to a graduate degree program, students must be registered for a minimum of one credit hour during all phases of their graduate education. This includes periods when students are engaged in research, working on or defending theses, taking comprehensive examinations, or in any other way utilizing University resources, facilities, or faculty time. Students called into military service, stricken by serious illness, or other cases of extenuating circumstances may apply for a Leave of Absence (see Leave of Absence, below).

Registration for every fall semester and spring semester is required. Summer registration is required for students taking examinations, completing culminating experiences, or defending theses. Graduate Students are required to satisfactorily complete the minimum number of credit hours in thesis, capstone, or research projects as established by their program, but must remain continuously enrolled in at least one credit hour until completion.

To maintain continuous enrollment the credit hour(s) must:

- Appear on the student's Program or
- Be research or capstone (574, 597, 598, 697, 698), thesis (599, 699), or comprehensive exam (595), or
- Be a graduate#level course.

Students that fail to maintain continuous enrollment and are re-admitted to the degree program, graduate under the degree requirements and policies in effect at the time of the new admission date.

Students who take an unapproved break in registration by failing to maintain continuous enrollment will relinquish their graduate standing in the University. Students who wish to be reinstated will be required to file a new Application to Graduate Studies and pay the application fee. Reinstatement is not automatic in such instances and will depend on a full review by the applicable program director of the student's past record upon receipt of the application.

Leave of Absence

Graduate students planning to discontinue enrollment for more than a semester must request approval for a leave of absence. This request must be filed and approved before the anticipated absence. The maximum leave of absence that will be granted will be for one calendar year except for cases of extenuating circumstances. A request for a leave of absence should be filed on the form obtained from the Graduate Studies forms web page (www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>)); it must be approved by the advisor and/or

program director, and reviewed by the Dean of the College and Director of Graduate Studies. There will be only one leave of absence granted for a student.

An approved leave of absence will enable students to re-enter their program without re-applying to the program. Students who do not enroll for a fall or spring semester without an approved leave of absence are considered withdrawn from the University under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students who do not attend for four semesters (two years) are considered dropped from their program and must re-apply under current admission policies. A student is not permitted to place any demands on University faculty or use any University resources for academic assistance during the leave.

Academic Policies

Class Attendance and Student Absences

Each faculty member determines class attendance policy. Any absence can only be excused on a basis of negotiation between student and faculty member.

Excused Official Absence

An official absence occurs when a student officially represents the University through an academic department, sponsored University program, or officially registered student organization. An official absence must be recognized as excused by a faculty member. Requests for an official absence shall be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs on the Student Travel Authorization form. This form should be obtained from the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (McM 201) at least one week in advance of the expected absence. This procedure will assure students the opportunity to make up examinations given when official University activities are scheduled.

Extent of Official Absence

When issued, an official absence is an excuse for time only and does not mean that a student is excused from the study assignment for that period. Each student is responsible for making up all work missed, as required by the instructor.

Class Enrollment Lists

At the beginning of each semester, the Registrar's Office furnishes each instructor with a list of students who have registered in each course. Only students who are regularly registered for a course may attend. No grade or credit will be given to students for any course in which they are not properly registered.

Course Load Limits

The normal full load for a graduate student is 9 graduate credits with a maximum of 12 graduate credits per semester. Overloads of up to 15 graduate credits must be approved by the advisor/program director and Dean and reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies. An overload exceeding 15 graduate credits must submit an appeal to the Graduate Committee.

Grades

For the purpose of computing a grade point average, grade points are as follows:

Letter Grade	Description
A	4.0
A-	3.70
B+	3.30
B	3.0
B-	2.70
C+	2.30
C	2.0
C-	1.70
D+	1.3

D	1.0
F	0

No credit for the master's degree will be allowed for grade less than "2.0" even though the grade is computed into the student's grade point average.

Incomplete ("I") Grades

Upon request, a grade of incomplete ("I") may be given in a course for which the course requirements are normally expected to be completed in the semester of enrollment. To qualify, a graduate student must have been in attendance for at least three-fourths of the semester, have completed at least three-fourths of the course requirements, and have been prevented from completing all of the requirements for the course. Prior to the time the instructor submits grades, the student must provide adequate written evidence to the instructor as to the reason(s) why he/she was unable to complete the course requirements. All work for removal of the deficiency must be specified in writing by the instructor and must be completed within one calendar year from the end of the enrollment semester, or earlier if required by the instructor. Extensions to this time allotment may be requested by a student appeal, recommended by the instructor and unit chairperson, and approved by the MSU Billings Graduate Committee.

An incomplete grade not made up within the prescribed length of time will automatically be converted to an "F" grade. Once the grade of incomplete has been converted to an "F" grade, the course must be repeated in order to have the grade changed. An "I" grade will not be included in the computation of the GPA.

In instances involving extended leave or resignation of the instructor of the incomplete course, the unit chairperson may act to establish an appropriate grade and verify completion of the coursework within the approved time frame.

Work in Progress "T" Grades

A grade of "T" (work in progress) is given by the instructor to indicate that the graduate student's work in a course is in progress and the requirements of the course are of such a nature that the assignment(s) could not be completed by the end of the semester of enrollment.

"T" grades will be allowed for the following courses: Thesis, Internship, Capstone, and Clinic. Enrollment/registration in these courses is restricted to students who have an approved program plan previously discussed with their advisor.

All work for removal of the "T" grades must be completed before graduation. A "T" grade will not be included in the computations of the GPA. A "T" grade that has not been completed before the end of the time limit will turn to an "F." A "T" grade given for a pass/no pass course that has not been completed before the end of the time limit will turn to an "X."

Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Grades

Courses in a student's degree program may not generally be taken on a Pass/No Pass basis. Each program has exceptions to this which are articulated in the program pages of the catalog.

A Pass ("P") grade indicates that a student has satisfied all course requirements and has earned the course credits. A No Pass ("NP") indicates that the student's performance in the course is below passing. The grade received (P or NP), however, is not calculated into the MSU Billings grade point average. Pass/No Pass grades from other institutions will not normally be used in the program. Courses taken on a P/NP basis at MSU Billings may not be changed to a letter grade at some future time.

A Pass is indicated on the academic transcript as a "P." An "X" indicates a No Pass.

Grade Reports

Students' grades are available over the web. Students who wish to have their grades mailed must leave a self-addressed stamped envelope at the Registrar's Office.

Grade Appeal Procedure

Montana State University Billings has a set of procedures for contesting a grade which must be followed for appropriate resolution. A grade appeal must be initiated by a student within fifteen (15) days from the official release date of those grades. All documentation must be in writing and submitted to the instructor and Student Resolution Officer (SRO). Please refer to the Student Handbook (<https://www.msubillings.edu/vcsa/studenthandbook.htm>) for a complete explanation of this process.

Step I You must meet with or attempt to make appropriate contact (email, phone, office hours, etc.) with your instructor to discuss your reasons for the grade appeal within fifteen (15) days from the official release date of the grades. Documentation supporting your claim should be made available at this meeting. The University would like to have both you and the instructor discuss the details, in a reasonable, open manner, and formulate an agreeable resolution.

Step II If the initial meeting (or attempt to meet) with your instructor did not provide an agreeable resolution, you must then contact the ASMSU Billings Student Resolution Officer and schedule a time for you and the SRO to meet and discuss the reasons for the appeal. The SRO can then help schedule a meeting between you and the instructor of the course you are contesting or, if Step I was not successful, can help move the appeal to Step III. You must submit any documentation supporting your claim and a copy of the course syllabus to the SRO. This information should be presented at the meeting with the instructor. The instructor will submit a formal decision to the student, in writing, within fifteen (15) University business days. A copy of the letter must be sent to the SRO.

Step III If no resolution is achieved at Step I or II, the dispute may be brought to the Department Chair of the relevant department (if the dispute is with the Department Chair, then refer to Step IV). All documentation and a letter of appeal must be submitted to the Department Chair within ten (10) University business days after receipt of the formal decision by the instructor. The SRO can assist with this process.

A meeting will then be scheduled between you and the Department Chair. The Chair will submit a formal decision to the student, in writing, within fifteen (15) University business days. A copy of the letter must be sent to the SRO and Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA).

Step IV If no resolution is achieved at Step III, the dispute may be brought to the Dean of the relevant College. All documentation and a letter of appeal must be submitted to the Dean within ten (10) University business days after receipt of the formal decision by the Chair. The SRO can assist with this process. A meeting will then be scheduled between you and the Dean with the SRO present. The Dean, as the representative of the relevant College, has the authority to review all documentation, discuss the matter with the instructor and Department Chair, and formulate a resolution. The Dean will submit a formal decision to the student, in writing, within fifteen (15) University business days. A copy of the letter must be sent to the SRO and Provost/VCAA.

Step V If no resolution is achieved at Step IV and the student wish to appeal further, the dispute may be brought before the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA). All documentation and a letter of appeal must be submitted to the VCAA within ten (10) University business days after receipt of the formal decision by the Dean. The SRO can assist with this process. The VCAA will review all grade appeal materials, and determine if the appeal needs to be heard by a Campus Hearing Committee. The Campus Hearing Committee is comprised of a maximum of three students, chosen by the Associated Students of Montana State University Billings (ASMSUB); three faculty members, chosen by the VCAA from a pool of faculty members who serve on the Academic Senate Academic Standards Committee; and the VCAA, who shall serve as the Hearing Officer. The Hearing Officer will not vote during the proceedings except in the case of a tie vote. The Campus Hearing Committee will follow prescribed hearing procedures and make a recommendation

directly to the Chancellor, who makes the final decision. The Chancellor will then have fifteen (15) University business days to send a formal and final decision to the student.

Student Resolution Officer

The Associated Students of MSU Billings employ a Student Resolution Officer to assist students with various academic and nonacademic questions and concerns. The purpose of the Student Resolution Officer is to help students resolve problems or refer them to the appropriate University officer for assistance. Procedures of the grievance process are available from the Student Resolution Officer in the ASMSU Billings office in the Student Union Building.

Student Progress - Academic Probation

Graduate students are placed on academic probation when their cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.0. Students on academic probation who fail to earn at least a 3.0 GPA during the next semester in courses on the approved program are suspended from the graduate program. Students receiving below a "C" (2.0) on courses on their approved plan must repeat the course the next time it is offered. Students receiving two or more "F" grades will be suspended regardless of cumulative GPA. All students on academic probation must meet with their academic advisors to fill out an improvement plan (IP) within 10 days of the start of the next semester. The IP must be approved and signed by either the student's academic advisor or department chair and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. A hold will be placed on the student until the IP is received. Students may not graduate on academic probation.

Academic Suspension

Students academically suspended from a graduate program may apply for readmission after waiting one academic year. At the time of readmission the student's application will be evaluated based upon programmatic guidelines. Students who are suspended from a program must meet with their advisor to reapply for admission. Graduate students academically suspended a second time will be dismissed and may not be readmitted.

Appeal Process:

Students who are suspended or denied readmission may petition to appeal the decision. To petition, the student should coordinate with their advisor and must submit the Petition of Waiver of Graduate Policy form available on the website (www.msubillings.edu/grad (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/>)) to the Office of Graduate Studies within ten University working days of the date the student was notified. The petition must clearly state why the student is appealing and provide evidence that supports this request.

The petition will be reviewed by the department chair or their designee, and the Graduate Committee at its next scheduled meeting during the academic year. The Graduate Committee may deny the appeal. The Committee may also choose to grant the appeal with specific criteria outlined in a written decision to the student. The specific criteria outlined may not be appealed.

At the end of the returning semester, if the student has met all the requirements, he or she will be reinstated. However, should all the requirements not be met, the student will be dismissed a second time. This dismissal will be final, no appeal will be granted.

During the appeal process, if a student would like to register for classes, they must meet with their advisor and have those classes approved.

Students failing to make satisfactory progress in their program, such as continuous enrollment or timely completion of the incomplete grades, can be dismissed by the program.

Academic Dishonesty

Students at Montana State University Billings are expected to do their own work in their own words and with their own ideas. If they quote or paraphrase the words of others, they are expected to indicate whom it is they are quoting or paraphrasing.

An instructor who believes that a student has claimed the work of someone else as his or her own may take what steps he or she wishes up to failing the student and referring the student to others on campus for further discipline. The Student Handbook contains more detailed information about the policy on Academic Dishonesty. Please refer to Part IX, section B of the student handbook for further information.

Student Records

Academic Records

Official academic records of each student's scholastic achievement are kept on file in the Registrar's Office and include the following:

1. A Signed "Official Class Roll and Final Grade Report" from the instructor of each class in which the student is enrolled each semester.
2. An "Official Academic Record" (transcript) for each student officially enrolled.
3. Directory information of a student currently enrolled (See the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

Transcripts

A transcript is a copy of the complete, unabridged educational record of a student who has been or is currently enrolled. An official transcript is issued only to the student upon the student's written request. An official transcript is distinguished from an unofficial

copy of the student's record in that the official transcript carries the signature of the Registrar and bears the seal of Montana State University Billings.

As often as possible, transcripts are issued within five days following receipt of the transcript request and payment of the fee. During periods of registration, changes in registration, grading periods and Commencement, the Registrar's Office staff has to devote full time to such activities. Consequently, a longer time than usual is required for the issuance of transcripts.

All current and former Montana State University Billings students are entitled to one free official transcript; thereafter, each official transcript is processed only upon the receipt of a \$3.00 fee. The student's signature and/or personal request is required for the release of any transcript except when the transcript is released to those individuals who are considered to have a legitimate reason to have access to the student's transcript.

Transfer Credits

Non-degree credits can be transferred into a graduate program if they are approved by the program director or advisor and are from a regionally accredited (p. 1) institution. Each graduate program has limits on the number and type of transfer credits accepted. Non-degree graduate students may be eligible to transfer credits toward a master's degree contingent upon advisor and program review. All non-degree graduate credits earned at Montana State University Billings may be eligible for transfer. Non-degree graduate credits earned at other institutions must meet the rules stated below. Transfer credits must be equivalent to courses in the student's graduate program at MSU Billings. All transfer credits must meet the standards of transfer credit eligibility.

Transfer credits:

- Must have a grade of "B" (3.0) or higher. This includes courses from a previous MSUB graduate degree or a graduate degree from another accredited institution.

- Cannot be more than six (6) years old when transferred or ten (10) years old upon completion of the degree. No exceptions to the time limit will be granted.
- Cannot have been used to fulfill the undergraduate degree requirements.
- Cannot be undergraduate level.
- Cannot be pass/fail, credit, or satisfactory.
- Cannot be credits for life experience.

The following are credits that will be determined by individual programs:

- Credits awarded by postsecondary institutions for noncredit courses, workshops, and seminars offered by other postsecondary institutions as part of continuing education or professional development programs.
- Credits used for completion of a graduate degree at another institution.
- Credits given for correspondence courses.

Official (sealed) transcripts of any transfer credit to be used in a program must be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies for posting on the MSUB Official Transcript. Once posted, the courses will appear in DegreeWorks. If the class is to be taken, the student must submit an official transcript immediately upon completion to Graduate Studies for posting on the transcript.

College of Health Professions and Science

Transfer credits for the **Master of Health Administration** are accepted from region (p. 1)ally accredited (p. 1) institutions of higher education on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the student's advisor.

For the **Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling**, a maximum of one-fourth of the credits necessary for the plan of study can be transferred credits, if they are graded a "B" or above and within the six-year limit. In addition to the above, transfer credits must meet the following conditions:

1. The courses must be relevant to the degree program as a whole as approved in the program plan review process.
2. All transfer courses on a plan must be approved by the advisor and/or advisory committee and be documented by course descriptions and/or course outlines.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Programs will approve transfer credits on a case-by-case basis. A copy of the official transcripts recording the transfer courses must be sent directly from the registrar of that institution to the Office of Graduate Studies.

If approved, a student may transfer a maximum of six to nine semester hours of approved graduate credit from an accredited institution as determined by the program.

Correspondence courses are not accepted as transfer graduate credit.

College of Education

A maximum of one-fourth of the credits earned in post-baccalaureate courses at other accredited graduate degree-granting institutions may be used on a program plan for the **Master of Education** or **Master of Science in Special Education** at Montana State University Billings. Transfer credits must meet the following conditions:

1. The courses must be relevant to the degree program as a whole as approved in the program plan review process.
2. All transfer courses to be used on a student's plan must be approved by the advisor and/or advisory committee and be documented by course descriptions and/or course outlines.

Montana State University Professional Education System Collaborative Courses for the Graduate Core in the Master of Education Degree

Three campuses of Montana State University that offer the Master of Education Degree have agreed upon a collaborative graduate core of courses to facilitate better access for individuals seeking this degree. Candidates for the Master of Education degree may use up to 12 credits, solely or in combination, from any of the campuses at Billings, Bozeman, or Havre as part of their program plan if approved by the student's committee. These credits are treated as credits in residence and do not count against the transfer limit of credits from other institutions of higher education.

However, at least fifty percent of all credits used on a plan must be from the campus awarding the degree.

The following courses constitute the MSU collaborative graduate core for students earning the Master of Education degree at MSU Billings (all are 3 credit courses):

MSU Billings

Code	Title	Credits
EDF 501	Research Dsgn & Interpretation	3
EDF 530	Adv Human Dev & Learning	3
EDCI 610	Curr Theory: Analysis & Pract	3
EDF 515	Social & Phil Issues in Educ	3

MSU-Bozeman

Code	Title	Credits
EDCI 506	Applied Educational Research	3
EDCI 532	General School Curriculum	3

MSU-Northern

Code	Title	Credits
EDUC 517	Research Methods	3
EDPY 604	Applied Classroom Psychology	3
EDUC 603	Curriculum Foundations and Design	3

Extension Credits

All extension credits earned through Montana State University Billings are considered as resident credits. Extension credits earned at any other accredited institution may be eligible for transfer according to graduate transfer policies.

Special Courses

Independent Study

(Includes all 591/691 courses)

Independent study courses permit investigation into topics not covered by existing courses or allow more concentrated study of topics than is possible in existing courses. A maximum of six semester credits may be used in a program plan.

The following policies govern graduate independent study:

1. A Graduate Student Independent Study Agreement must be approved by the instructor, advisor, unit chairperson and Dean. The Graduate Student Independent Study Agreement forms are available online at www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>). The original copy of the approved agreement for the graduate independent study

must be provided to the Registrar and copies given to the student, instructor, unit chair and Office of Graduate Studies for inclusion in the student's file.

2. The agreement submitted by the student must include the following:
 - a. A clear statement of the nature and direction of the investigation;
 - b. The method to be used in carrying out the investigation;
 - c. If appropriate, a preliminary bibliography of resources to be studied; and
 - d. The basis for evaluation of the work. It is recommended that a written report serve as a culminating activity for the project.
3. Only students whose plan has been approved or who already have a master's degree will be permitted to enroll for graduate independent study. The specific college dean may grant deviations from this requirement.
4. Courses listed in this catalog as regularly offered courses may not be under the designation "591/691 Independent Study." When a faculty member, unit chairperson, and dean agree to provide to a student a regularly numbered course by an independent study method, the enrollment will be by the regular course number, but the same independent study agreement form will be used as described in part one and two above.
5. If for a valid reason a student is unable to complete the independent study in the term of enrollment, the student may request that the instructor assign an incomplete ("I") grade if requirements previously stated for incompletes are met. A Work in Progress grade ("T") is not allowable for Independent study. For more information, see Incomplete and Work in Progress Grades, above.

Internships and Clinics

Many degree programs require completion of at least one practicum or supervised field-based experience. The aim of the internship or clinic is to allow the candidate to utilize advanced skills in an applied setting under the supervision of a graduate faculty advisor. Students must have an approved plan and meet all other program requirements before an application for field-based experience is processed. Students should plan to spend a minimum of 45 hours on-site for every semester credit earned. All field experiences, including all 590/690, 594/694, 595/695, 597/697 courses, with the exception of RD 590, will be graded according to program grading policies.

Applications for all such field experiences at the graduate level must be processed and approved in the term before the experience is to begin. Prior approval through the advisor and the department chairperson is required before pre-registration or registration is allowed.

Application forms for field experiences are available online at www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm (<https://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>). Students in the rehabilitation counseling program or any student doing a counseling field-based experience in a non-public school setting must be covered by liability insurance during their period of internship or clinical practice. The medical professional liability policy coverage expense (variable, but commonly \$30 per semester) will be added to the semester bill by the Business Office. Students are advised that professional participation at a field site prior to the start of (or continuing beyond the end of) a semester may be uninsured during such periods of time.

All practica, internships, and supervised field experiences in the College of Education require a valid criminal background report and notarized Self-Disclosure prior to beginning course work. Students cannot be registered and placed in any field experience until the criminal background report is on file with MSU Billings. The background check must be current through the duration of the semester or field experience, whichever ends later.

The criminal background report obtained from the Criminal Justice Information Services Bureau is a fingerprint based report that provides both state and federal reports. Information on the criminal background process can be found on the Educational Theory and Practice webpage: www.msubillings.edu/coe/FingerprintInfo.htm (<http://www.msubillings.edu/coe/FingerprintInfo.htm>)

All questions concerning the process can be directed to the Licensure Officer at 406-657-2293.

Cooperative Education

Cooperative Education (Co-Op) links students and employers in planned, credit-bearing work experiences (at local, state, and national sites) related to the student's major/minor field of study. Cooperative Education (406-657-1717) enables students to apply theory to the real world of work, acquire career experience, and enhance personal growth while earning credit.

Human Subjects Protocol

All research conducted by any person affiliated with MSU Billings and involving human participants as subjects must be reviewed whether or not the project is part of a formal course. The information on the review process and application form are available on the Office of Research Compliance web site (www.msubillings.edu/orc) or at the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs, McM 203.

Thesis

A thesis is an extended written analysis and interpretation of a specific topic or subject matter. It articulates a unique perspective or specific claim with respect to the topic and attempts to substantiate the legitimacy of the perspective or claim through research. The research must be informed by a literature search and produce qualified conclusions, which contribute to the discipline. The project must meet the expectations for research as defined by the academic discipline.

Preparation of a thesis may be of great value for some graduate students and for the profession because research projects are a crucial step in improving education.

The desired outcome is to produce a paper of such quality and currency that it might be published in a professional journal or otherwise disseminated to the field. The student, advisor, and thesis committee have shared responsibility for defining the objectives and scope of the thesis. The presentation and oral defense of either project will be open to the academic community and are designed to give public recognition for the student's achievement.

An approved graduate plan of study must be on file in the Office of Graduate Studies prior to enrollment in Thesis 599/699.

Graduate students submit the thesis in electronic format to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Committee and Prospectus

Before a student begins a thesis, the student's thesis committee must approve a prospectus for the project. The thesis committee will consist of a minimum of three (3) members, one of whom will be from outside the student's department. The thesis committee may be called together to review project progress at the discretion of the advisor.

Research projects involving human subjects must comply with the MSU Billings IRB policies. Policy guidelines and protocol forms may be obtained from the Office of Grants & Sponsored Programs (www.msubillings.edu/grants) (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grants/>).

Thesis Timeline

The thesis process from determining a committee, developing a prospectus and having it approved, conducting the study, drafting the thesis, the defense, and revisions typically takes a year to complete.

The student begins discussions with his/her Advisor, files an approved Plan of Study, and declares intent to do a thesis. The student consults with advisor for approval to form a Thesis Advisory Committee. The Examining Committee Chair must have a terminal degree in the field. After a Committee is formed, the student submits a

thesis prospectus for approval. This process will involve registering for thesis credit. In order to use the library, faculty advisor, and other campus facilities, students must be enrolled in the thesis for the semester. Students must be enrolled every semester they are involved in work on the thesis including defense. In consultation with the advisor, the number of credits per semester will be determined based on the work being done up to the maximum credits of the program.

In consultation with the advisor, the student develops the thesis and periodically submits drafts for critique to the Thesis Committee.

- Eight (8) weeks prior to the end of the intended semester of graduation, the final draft should be submitted to the thesis committee.
- Four (4) weeks prior to the date of the defense and with the committee's approval, the student and advisor schedule the thesis defense with the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Two (2) weeks prior to the date of the defense, the student and advisor notify the Office of Graduate Studies of the date, time, place, and title of the thesis. The Graduate Studies Office notifies the campus faculty, staff, and students of the planned defense.

After a successful defense, it is the student's responsibility to obtain required signatures on the Signature Page. Signatures include the Chairperson of the Examining Committee, Members of the Examining Committee, the Dean of the College, and the Director of Graduate Studies.

The student will deliver the completed thesis with the completed signature page in the approved electronic format to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Defense and Final Disposition

To complete the process, the student must do the following:

- Sign and date the Ownership and Non-plagiarism Affirmation form.
- Schedule the oral defense with the advisory committee no later than eight weeks prior to the end of the intended graduation semester. Members of the advisory (examining) committee must have a copy of the paper for review no later than one week prior to the final examination.
- Make revisions required by the advisory committee, as necessary.
- Obtain the signed approval page with the revised, final copy of the paper from advisor and advisory committee.
- Deliver the approved Thesis, including Publishing Page and Ownership and Non-plagiarism affirmation page in the approved electronic format to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will deliver the Thesis for publication as specified on the Publishing Page.

Preparing the Thesis

The program will determine which professional style is appropriate for its disciplines.

Example Style Guides include the following:

- University of Chicago stylebook, Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*.
- *Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*

Sequenced Order of Thesis Contents

Each bulleted item below should follow the professional format designated by the program of study.

- Format and page numbers
- Page for committee, dean and director signatures and dates
- Preliminary pages

- Title page
- Abstract:
- Table of contents
- List of tables
- List of illustrations
- Text
- References
- Appendices
- Bibliography
- Footnotes
- Maps, graphs, and photos
- Non-plagiarism form
- PDF format for electronic submission

Appeal to Consider Having Graduate Degree Program Requirement(s) Waived

Certain problems encountered by graduate students may result in a request to have an exception made to academic standards of the Graduate Program as stated in this catalog. A graduate student may request such an exception by filing a special appeal which may be obtained online at www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm. (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>)

To appeal a requirement, the student must complete a "Petition to Waive Graduate Policy" form available on the website. The student will complete the top portion of the appeal. The appeal should be given to the student's academic advisor who will forward to the chair of the department, followed by the dean of the College for review. When completed, the appeal will go to the Office of Graduate Studies and will then be presented to the Montana State University Billings Graduate Committee for consideration.

Time Limit and Update Process for the Graduate Degree Programs

All work toward the master's degree, including any credit transferred from another graduate program, a thesis, and final comprehensive examinations must be completed within six consecutive years from the date the student is admitted to the program. No coursework may be more than ten years old at the time of degree completion. There are no exceptions to the ten year rule and no waiver of policy. Courses older than 10 years must be retaken.

If extenuating circumstances keep the student from completing his or her degree requirements within this six year time period, an extension may be considered.

Students who exceed or expect to exceed the time limit on a graduate degree may petition for an extension if he or she is not beyond the seventh year. A waiver from the time limit policy is not automatic; the student must show and document in the petition the reasons for not finishing in the six year time limit. The extension may be as long as two semesters and one summer session. Waiver requests that are initiated past the seventh year will not be considered. (See Part 2 and 3 below.)

1. Updating Courses as Part of the Program Plan

As part of the process of completing the program plan, a student must provide evidence of currency of knowledge in courses included in a plan that will be older than six years but not older than ten years when the plan is completed. Under these conditions, requests for permission to update must be filed on the "Graduate Course Update Request" form found on the web at www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>). The conditions and restraints governing these requests are as follows:

1. Requests to update graduate coursework will be restricted to coursework applicable to the degree from an accredited institution carrying a letter grade of "B" (3.0) or better. This includes course work from previous graduate work at MSU Billings.
2. Requests to update graduate coursework will be limited to no more than 10 semester credits.
3. Attached to the form requesting that a course be updated shall be a statement of update objectives, activities, products, and evaluation process. The student, instructor, advisor, and the chairperson must sign it.
4. When the updating process for a course has been completed, the faculty member responsible for supervising the updating will forward to the Office of Graduate Studies a signed and dated copy of the request form specifying the satisfactory completion of the updating review process.

2. Time Extensions of a Plan Prior to Expiration Date

A time extension for any graduate degree program may be requested with the Appeal for Time Extension found on the graduate studies web page, www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>). Once the appeal is complete, it will be presented to the MSU Billings Graduate Committee for consideration. The petition for a time extension must be presented to the Committee prior to the end of the term in which the regular six-year time limit expires. The petition must include clearly stated justification for the time extension and carry the signed recommendations of the student's advisor and department chairperson. The petition will have as appendices duly executed "Graduate Course Update Request" forms for each course, up to a maximum of 10 semester credits, which will be out-of-date by the adjusted time of expected graduation. If an extension is granted it will be a one-time extension and cannot be extended.

3. Time Extensions after Expiration Date of a Program

Waiver requests that are initiated past the seventh consecutive year since the start date will not be considered. Consideration for time extension for an uncompleted and expired program within the seven year limit may be given using the same review process as appropriate for an original plan. The student should begin by discussing his/her objectives and circumstances with the advisor or department chairperson. Requests to update certain courses, repeat courses, or substitute more recent courses are typical avenues to be explored. Under no circumstance will an extension be granted for courses exceeding the ten year time limit. Any courses past the ten year limit will have to be retaken or substituted with current coursework. If an extension is granted it will be a one-time extension and cannot be extended.

4. Maintaining Matriculation Status

Students out more than four semesters (spring and fall for two years) must reapply and start the program from the beginning. Courses cannot exceed the amount of transfer credits allowed by the program. Courses already taken may transfer if they meet the six and ten year requirements.

5. Effective Date of Graduation Requirements

Within the six-year period, the student must meet the graduation requirements in effect in the catalog current at the time the plan of study was approved. Requests to change to the requirements of a different catalog must be approved by the advisor, academic department chairperson, and Dean and be placed on file with the Office of Graduate Studies. The form entitled "Request to Change Catalog in Effect" should be used and is available online at www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm (<http://www.msubillings.edu/grad/forms.htm>)

Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate from Montana State University Billings with a graduate degree, a student must satisfy certain requirements. The following list is a general guideline for graduation requirements. Please see the individual program section for specific or additional degree requirements:

1. A graduate student must have fulfilled all curricular requirements specified in the program of study or in the student's approved plan as modified by any approved changes, or the program requirements as stated in this catalog with changes and electives approved by the advisor, department chairperson, college dean, and Director of Graduate Studies.
2. The student must have a 3.00 GPA, or 3.25 GPA for Public Relations, for all courses included in the plan. For graduate students in education, this includes both the Professional Core and Professional Specialization courses. No student may have below a "C" (2.0) on any coursework. Students must meet any "C" requirements of the program regarding the number allowed. No student may graduate on Academic Warning or with a cumulative GPA below 3.0.
3. The student must have passed all written and oral comprehensive examinations required in the student's program.
4. Any student opting to write a Thesis must provide the Office of Graduate Studies with the final paper in the acceptable format along with signed approval sheets.
5. The student must file a formal Application for Graduation with the Office of Admissions by the deadlines set for each semester. The application must be signed by the faculty advisor and be accompanied by a \$50.00 graduation fee. Application forms are available from the Office of Admissions as well as online. On receipt of the application, the Office of the Registrar will circulate a Final Evaluation for Graduation that will be utilized to ensure that the student has met all degree requirements.

Once all requirements are completed and all required signatures on the Final Evaluation for Graduation are obtained, the student's graduation date and degree will be posted on the student's Official Academic Record (transcript). The student will be sent a letter certifying the student's graduation and providing a final transcript.

If all requirements are not satisfied by the end of the term for which the student applied to graduate, the date of graduation will be delayed until the end of the semester or session in which all requirements are completed. Students should be aware of the seven-year limit within which all requirements must be met.

Commencement

Commencement is held once each year at the end of the spring term. Those students earning an undergraduate or graduate degree will be publicly recognized. A student who intends to complete all requirements for a master's degree by the end of the Summer Session will be permitted to participate in the preceding spring commencement ceremony so long as the student complies with the following procedures:

1. The student must file a formal Application for Graduation with the Registrar's Office and must have paid the \$50 graduation fee.
2. The student must meet by the end of the Summer Session all of the requirements for graduation, demonstrating this intention by pre-registering for all remaining required courses in the Summer Session by April 1.

Participating in the Commencement does not necessarily signify a student has graduated. Diplomas will be issued and graduation recorded on the transcript only after all degree requirements are certified to have been met by the Director of Graduate Studies.