Graduate Education Orientation

Fall 2018

Maribeth Price, Dean of Graduate Education

How to successfully complete your graduate program
The Office of Graduate Education
C 2201

- Maribeth Price
  - Dean of Graduate Education
- Rachel Howard
  - Admissions, applications, assistantships
- Trudy Severson
  - Student progress, POS processing, degree audits, thesis/dissertation processing
Where is the Office of Graduate Education?

You are here:

We are here:

Graduate Education Office
2201 Chemistry Building
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
501 East St. Joseph Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701-3995

Phone: (605) 355-3468
E-mail: Graduate.Admissions@sdsmt.edu
How is graduate school different from undergraduate?

• Rigor, Depth and Specialization
  • Fast paced classes
  • Full time load is 9 credits

• Freedom
  • Focus on your interests
  • Develop your own ideas
  • Explore, learn, think, READ

• Self-discipline and self-sufficiency
  • YOU are responsible for your learning
  • Classes are only part of your education
  • Treat grad school like a full time (or more) job
  • Take advantage of the opportunity for learning
  • Others can and will help
Graduate Advising

• Non-thesis Master’s degree
  • Primarily or exclusively coursework
  • Students assigned an advisor
  • Might include a project advisor or committee for degrees that require projects

• Thesis Master’s degree and PhD
  • Coursework AND research requirements
  • Students may be assigned an initial advisor
  • Students choose a major professor and assemble a committee to guide the research
  • Major professor usually takes over advising
General advising

• Advisor
  • Assigned to individual students
  • Guides student’s coursework
  • Mentors student’s development

• Graduate Coordinator
  • Faculty member assigned to oversee a program
  • Reviews coursework plans
  • Signs paperwork
  • May also serve as an initial or permanent advisor
Role of the major professor

• Guide student’s coursework
• Assist student in choosing a committee
• Assist student in developing research problem
• Guide student’s research
• Mentor student’s development as a research professional
Working with your advisor

• Build a relationship with your advisor/major professor

• Faculty are always busy.
  • They should reach out to you, but you can also reach out to them.

• Non-thesis students
  • Meet at least once per semester to review progress and plan courses

• Thesis/dissertation students
  • Meet at least once a month
  • Set short-term goals at each meeting and review progress at the next meeting.
  • Respect faculty time by being prepared for meetings
Other Committee notes:

• Students **CAN** change Major Professors and/or Advisors. It may affect funding, or when you complete the degree, but you have the right to do so.

• Sometimes Major Professors leave the university. On such occasions, contact the Graduate Coordinator and Department Head as SOON as you can to make alternative arrangements.
The Graduate Committee

- **Purpose:** to guide the student’s academic coursework selection and research activities
- **A committee includes**
  - **Major professor**
    - Primary guide and mentor of the student
  - **Graduate Division Representative**
    - Must come from outside student’s department/program
    - Oversees quality of the degree and that students are treated fairly
  - At least one additional member (Master’s)
  - At least three additional members (PhD)
What if…?

• Disagreements, issues, and conflicts may arise
• Many people are available to help resolve them
  • Your Major Professor
  • Your Program’s Graduate Coordinator
  • Your Committee
  • Your Department Head
  • Your Graduate Division Representative
  • The Dean of Graduate Education
  • The Dean of Students
  • Human Resources

• Who to approach depends on the issue and who you are comfortable talking to about it
Restricted research

• Some research areas and funding sources limit or delay the distribution of research results.
  • Intellectual Property that you or your professor want to patent,
  • Intellectual Property that the funding company wants to patent,
  • Research that the U.S. Government wants to control (such as weapons research).

• This MAY affect your ability to publish your results which, in turn, MAY influence your post-degree job search.

• BEFORE you begin a research project, check with your Major Professor about such constraints.
Degree requirements

• Graduate School has **minimum** requirements that **ALL** programs must meet, such as:
  • 30 credits for an MS
  • 72 credits for PhD, at least 36 must be courses
  • At least 50% of credits must be 600 level or higher
  • No more than 12 double-counted credits for the accelerated MS

• Departments set additional requirements
  • Be **VERY** familiar with your program
  • Requirements listed in the university Catalog
Academic catalog

- Your go-to guide
- Policies
- Program requirements
- Course descriptions

http://ecatalog.sdsmt.edu/

Note: For course schedules, search WebAdvisor or consult with your advisor or department secretary.
Program of Study (POS)

• Due in second semester
  • First semester, if you are in an accelerated MS

• Developed by the student in consultation with major professor/advisor

• Establishes the committee, if applicable

• Defines courses for degree completion

• Can be modified if needed; submit revisions before final semester

• Used by Graduate Office to verify completion of degree requirements
Graduate examinations

Graduate Office

• Master’s exam
  • (GGE/ME and Master’s of Engineering only)

• PhD qualifying exam
  • A coursework and general knowledge exam focused on your discipline
  • Taken once coursework is mostly complete

• PhD comprehensive exam
  • Student writes and defends a research proposal
  • On successful completion, student is admitted to PhD candidacy
  • Should be completed before research gets too far
A word to the wise

• It is to your benefit to submit your POS promptly
  • Establishes courses that will be counted toward the degree
  • Aids in course planning and helps avoid roadblocks

• It is to your benefit to complete PhD examinations as soon as is reasonable
  • Course content is fresh in your mind
  • An approved proposal is a road map and an agreement with your committee
Degree milestones and timelines

**MS and thesis MS**
- File Program of Study
  - 2nd semester*
- Choose thesis topic
- Complete courses
- Do project/thesis
- File graduation application
  - Penultimate semester
- Master’s exam
  - (Geo/ME/MENG only)
- Defend and complete thesis

**PhD**
- File Program of Study
  - 2nd semester
- Complete courses
- Qualifying exam
  - 1-2 years in
- Comprehensive exam
  - 2-3 years in
- Do research
- File graduation application
  - Penultimate semester
- Defend and complete dissertation

* Accelerated students in 1st semester
Registration requirements

• Full-time registration is 9 credits/semester

• Students must be continually registered for at least 2 credits each fall and spring until degree is complete

• Students on assistantships must be registered for at least 9 credits—no exceptions!
  • Consult the Grad Office before dropping courses, or you may end up owing more tuition.

• Register for next-semester courses before the previous semester ends
Grade requirements

- Must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA of ALL graduate level courses taken
- C grade or better in all graduate level courses applied to the degree
- If you do not meet requirements, you
  - may be placed on probation
  - are not eligible for assistantship funding without special approval
  - may require special approval to continue your program (after one year on probation)
- NOTE: courses remain on your transcript FOREVER. They cannot be removed.
Leave of Absence

• If a situation arises that prevents you from making progress, you can request one.
• Stops the clock on your time limit
• If you just disappear without filing an LOA
  • You may need to reapply to return
  • You may not be allowed to return
• International students—see the Ivanhoe International Center
To succeed...be safe!

1) **Students are NOT immortal**

2) MOST injuries on university campuses happen to students – especially graduate students

3) Beware the the common hazards that one tends to neglect:
   - heavy objects falling on your feet
   - back injuries from lifting heavy objects
   - falling off a ladder
   - electrocution
   - laser injuries to your eyes,
   - chemical burns, etc.

See the SDSM&T Office of Environmental Health and Safety: http://www.sdsmt.edu/Campus-Services/Environmental-Health-and-Safety/
Lab Safety Training

• Conducted by the Environmental Health and Safety Office on campus for staff/students
  • General Hazard Communication Lab Safety
  • Biosafety/Blood Borne Pathogens
  • Hazardous Waste Training
  • Radiation Safety
  • Laser Safety

• Take the types of training required for work in each type of lab

• [http://www.sdsmt.edu/Campus-Services/Environmental-Health-and-Safety/](http://www.sdsmt.edu/Campus-Services/Environmental-Health-and-Safety/)
To succeed...take charge!

- Read journal articles every week.
- Go beyond the minimum in classes.
- Seek your own ideas and questions.
- Become the expert.
- Start writing thesis/dissertation in the first semester
  - It’s called a literature review
- Use university resources – don’t be shy!
To succeed...get involved!

• Become a part of the campus community
• Make friends and build your support groups
• Don’t get hurt; don’t get anyone else hurt
• Understand and follow the student conduct code in the SDSM&T Student Handbook: http://www.sdsmt.edu/Campus-Life/Student-Resources/Student-Handbook/
• You ALWAYS have the right to talk to Human Resources (HR), the Dean of Students, the Graduate Dean, or Public Safety about any issues that YOU deem important.
Are you ready?

- Activate your Mines email account-
  VERY IMPORTANT – this is the account that SD Mines uses to communicate with you!
- Complete the attendance confirmation on WebAdvisor
- Register for courses on WebAdvisor
- Complete assistantship paperwork (if applicable)
- Obtain a parking permit (sign up online)
- Obtain your student ID (cashier’s office, Surbeck Center)
- Arrange tuition payment
Dates to remember

• August 30 - Last day to add/drop courses with a refund
  • Courses listed on your registration after this date cannot be changed

• August 31 - Last day to make payment arrangements
  • You will be dropped from your courses if arrangements are not made

• November 2 - Last day to withdraw from courses with a “W”
Grad Ed forms and policies

• Be familiar with the Graduate Education policies
  • In the academic catalog: http://ecatalog.sdsmt.edu/

• Grad ed forms can be found on our website:
  • http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Graduate-Education/Grad-Ed-Forms/

• Additional forms for the Registrar including Permission of Instructor
  • http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Registrar/RAS/RAS-Forms/

• Thesis writing workshops are held every semester (invitations are sent via e-mail). Thesis writing guidelines are available online:
  • http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Graduate-Education/Grad-Ed-Forms/
Where to find it

- Grad Ed Policies
- Grad Ed Forms
Sources of help and advice

- Your Advisor or Major Professor
- Your Program’s Graduate Coordinator
- Your Committee
- Your Department
- Your Department Head
- The Office of Graduate Education
  - (Rachel and Trudy are extraordinarily helpful and knowledgeable.)
- Thesis/Dissertation Writing Workshop
  - Once every semester; watch for announcements

But it’s up to YOU.
Questions?