Graduate Program Requirements

Bemidji State University offers multiple pathways toward earning a Master’s degree. Academic departments through the curricular process and approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs choose the pathway (credit count and final project) for the graduate degrees they offer. Following the best practices established by the Council of Graduate Schools, Bemidji State University offers a variety of pathways for completing a master’s degree as outlined below.

Master’s Completion Project

Each graduate program has chosen the final project completion route for its master’s degree program. A final project can come in a variety of forms: thesis (original research or an original creative project), research paper (comprehensive review and exposition of scholarly works within a disciplinary area), a capstone project (project based or simulations), and/or written comprehensive examinations. A Master of Arts or a Master of Science may utilize any of the final project forms listed above as determined by the department, college dean and VP for Academic Affairs but typically focuses on a thesis or research paper but can utilize the capstone project. The expectation for the Master of Arts or Master of Science is that the final project will be submitted in written format (utilizing appropriate disciplinary writing format: MLA, APA, etc.) to the School of Graduate Studies have been approved by all required personnel of the university.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to the university and a graduate program signifies that a student has satisfied the entrance requirements that normally will lead to a degree. Advancement to candidacy, formally admits the student into a graduate degree program with the intent of earning a master’s degree. Candidacy is granted to a student who has demonstrated, by initial credits and subsequent grades earned in a Bemidji State University graduate program, the ability to produce quality work in accordance with the program, college and university expectations.

1. Requirements for Admission to Candidacy: All candidates are required to satisfy any conditions attached to their admission and achieve a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.00 ("B") for course work attempted.

2. Application for Admission to Candidacy: Students must submit the Admission to Candidacy Form upon completion of 9-12 graduate-level credits. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the advisor for the purpose of applying for candidacy, designing a plan of study, and (where/when appropriate) forming an advisory committee.

3. Admission to Candidacy for Dual Degree/Program: Student who are attempting two earn two graduate degrees simultaneously at Bemidji State University must submit an Admission to Candidacy Form for both programs. No more than 10 credits of core and elective courses may count across programs.
4. A Program of Study or Application for Admission to Candidacy: The program of study a) must be determined in consultation with the student’s advisor, b) must list all course work completed as well as all anticipated course work to be used to satisfy degree requirements, and c) requires the approval of the advisor, the department/program chair, the college dean, and the Director, School of Graduate Studies.

5. Changes to an Approved Program of Study: A Graduate Petition approved by the advisor, the department/program chair, College Dean, and the Director, School of Graduate Studies, is required if the student intends to substitute course work in areas other than the elective category. A revised second set of candidacy plans must be approved if the student requests more than three (3) non-elective courses, or six (6) credits, in substitutions to the approved program.

6. Transfer Credit: All transfer credits should be indicated on the Application for Admission to Candidacy. No more than 10 credits can be transferred from another accredited university towards a graduate program at Bemidji State University.

7. Students must consult with their assigned advisor as to the master’s completion project pathway to be utilized and indicated on the Application for Admission to Candidacy.

**Thesis Option**

1. Coursework Completion: A minimum of 30 credits is required in the thesis option including the credits granted for the thesis. A maximum of 10 graduate semester credits may be considered in transfer from another regionally accredited U.S. or approved international college or university. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for all coursework and completion of all program requirements are required prior to the student’s final thesis oral defense and submission. 50% of coursework excluding the thesis credits must be at the 6000 level.

2. Submission of the Culminating Project Committee Approval Form. The initial date for convening the committee must be recorded on the form. The student is not permitted to submit the Culminating Project Committee Approval Form during the same semester in which they plan to graduate, it must be submitted at least one semester prior to the graduation semester. All committee members must be approved and hold Graduate Faculty status at Bemidji State University. The committee will be chaired by the principal thesis advisor and will be composed of at least two graduate faculty. A graduate faculty representative will be appointed by the School of Graduate Studies as an outside process monitor.
3. Submit the Application for Graduation during the first week of the final semester.
   a. The Application for Graduation is valid for one semester only and must be resubmitted if the student wishes to change semesters.

4. Schedule the final defense/oral examination with the committee.
   a. Notification of Final Defense/Oral Examination must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies three weeks prior to the selected date for the final defense/oral examination. At this time, the School of Graduate Studies will appoint the Graduate Faculty Representative.
   b. Cannot be held during the same semester when the initial Culminating Project Committee Approval Form is submitted.

5. A student in the Thesis Option is required to submit an original manuscript and one copy of the thesis to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. All theses must be prepared in accordance with the “Handbook for the Preparation of the Thesis or Research Paper.”

6. Department submits “Confirmation of Degree Requirements” Form.

Research Paper Option

1. Coursework Completion: A minimum of 30 credits is required in the research paper option including the credits granted for the research paper. A maximum of 10 graduate semester credits may be considered in transfer from another regionally accredited U.S. or approved international college or university. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for all coursework is required and completion of all program requirements are required prior to the student’s final oral defense and submission. 50% of coursework excluding the research paper credits must be at the 6000 level.

2. Submission of the Culminating Project Committee Approval Form. The initial date for convening the committee must be recorded on the form. The student is not permitted to submit the Culminating Project Committee Approval Form during the same semester in which they plan to graduate, it must be submitted at least one semester prior to the graduation semester. All committee members must be approved and hold Graduate Faculty status at Bemidji State University. The committee will be chaired by the principal advisor and will be composed of at least two department faculty and one additional Graduate Faculty member. A graduate faculty representative will be appointed by the School of Graduate Studies as an outside process monitor.

3. Submit the Application for Graduation during the first week of the final semester.
   a. The Application for Graduation is valid for one semester only and must be resubmitted if the student wishes to change semesters.
4. Schedule the final defense/oral examination with the committee.
   a. Notification of Final Defense/Oral Examination must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies three weeks prior to the selected date for the final defense/oral examination. At this time, the School of Graduate Studies will appoint the Graduate Faculty Representative.
   b. Cannot be held during the same semester when the initial Culminating Project Committee Approval Form is submitted.

5. Department submits “Confirmation of Degree Requirements” Form.

Capstone Option

1. Coursework Completion: A minimum of 30 credits is required for the Capstone option including the credits granted for the Capstone course and all program requirements must be fulfilled. A maximum of 10 graduate semester credits may be considered in transfer from another regionally accredited U.S. or approved international college or university. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for all coursework and completion of all program requirements are required prior to the student’s final capstone submission. 50% of coursework excluding the capstone credits must be at the 6000 level.

2. Submission of the Culminating Project Committee Approval Form. All committee members must be approved and hold Graduate Faculty status at Bemidji State University. The committee will be chaired by the advisor and will be composed of at least one other graduate faculty member.

3. Submit the Application for Graduation during the first week of the final semester.
   a. The Application for Graduation is valid for one semester only and must be resubmitted if the student wishes to change semesters.

4. Schedule the final review of the Capstone project with the committee.

5. Department submits “Confirmation of Degree Requirements” Form.

Written Comprehensive Examination Option

1. Coursework Completion: A minimum of 30 credits is required in the written comprehensive examination. A maximum of 10 graduate semester credits may be considered in transfer from another regionally accredited U.S. or approved international college or university. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for all coursework and completion of all program requirements are required prior to the student’s submission of the written comprehensive exams. 50% of coursework must be at the 6000 level, no credits are given for the written examination
2. Submission of the Culminating Project Committee Approval Form. Three members of the department, chaired by the primary advisor, will serve as the written examination readers. The student is not permitted to submit the Culminating Project Committee Approval Form during the same semester in which they plan to graduate, it must be submitted at least one semester prior to the graduation semester. All committee members must be approved and hold Graduate Faculty status at Bemidji State University.

3. Submit the Application for Graduation during the first week of the final semester.
   a. The Application for Graduation is valid for one semester only and must be resubmitted if the student wishes to change semesters. The application must contain the dates for the written examinations.

4. Schedule the written examinations with the committee.
   a. Notification of the Examination date must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies three weeks prior to the selected date for the written examination.
   b. The committee members will compose five written comprehensive examination questions for the student’s schedule examination date and submit the questions to the School of Graduate Studies.
   c. During the examination period, the student will select three out of five questions to answer for the exam. The questions will be submitted electronically to the School of Graduate Studies.
   d. The School of Graduate Studies will send copies of the written examinations to the three committee members, who will independently grade the examination questions as Satisfactory “S” or Unsatisfactory “U”. In order to pass the examination, a student must earn at least 2 “S” grades per each question submitted from the three graders on the committee.
   e. If a student does not pass the final examinations on the first round, they are permitted to take the examinations again during the following semester. Only two attempts are permitted for the examination process, if a student does not pass during these two attempts, they will be dismissed from the program.

5. Department submits “Confirmation of Degree Requirements” Form if the student successfully passes the written examinations.