

Programs in Graduate Study

Master of Education (MEd) in Counselor Education Master of Science in Education (MSEd) in Instruction and Learning

Office: Cowan Hall Room 309

The graduate programs provide advanced academic preparation for individual graduate students, taking into consideration the student's experience, interests, and previous education. The programs provide studies that focus on recognition and definition of problems, theory and practice, assessment and evaluation, interpretation, and application.

Students who hold Class 2 licensure, have three years teaching experience, and have successfully completed the master's degree may be recommended for a Class I Teaching License. Students who complete the Master of Education, Counselor Education, but lack teacher licensure may be eligible for the Class 6 Specialist License upon program completion, and faculty recommendations. It is the responsibility of all students to submit a request for their institutional recommendation at the completion of their program of study to the Graduate Office.

Classification of Graduate Students

Students must be admitted to their specific program at or before 25% of program course requirements are completed. (9 credit hours for the Instruction and Learning program and 15 credit hours for the Counselor Education program). Until specific program admission is received, all students who are not admitted for specific degrees are classified as graduate, non-degree students.

Admission Policy and Requirements

At Montana State University-Northern, any student who has earned a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university has the opportunity to pursue graduate study. However, admission decisions for specific graduate programs are made for each applicant individually, and applicants may or may not be judged acceptable to the specific graduate program, regardless of the institution from which credentials are submitted.

In addition to the admission requirements given in this section, each applicant shall review the admission requirements for specific graduate programs available upon request from the Office of Graduate Studies. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that all appropriate application materials are submitted to the University and to the graduate program of their choice.

To be eligible to register for graduate coursework, all applicants must be admitted to the University. The applicant must:

- Complete the MSUN *Application for Admission to Graduate Programs* form prior to registration for the first term of coursework numbered at the 500 level;
- Applicants must specify on the application for admission either graduate Non-degree seeking or graduate Degree-seeking status;
- Submit official transcripts of all undergraduate and all previous graduate coursework to the Admissions Office;
- Forward a non-refundable \$50.00 admission fee; and
- For students born after December 31, 1956, submit proof of MMR immunization that was administered after December 31, 1967. The immunization dates must also be after the student's first birthday. Montana State law requires documentation that proves two immunizations against measles were given at least 30 days apart, and proof of rubella immunization. Any immunizations administered after June 11, 1993 must be an MMR. A physician, health agency or school official must sign the record.

Graduate Non-Degree Status

Non-degree seeking graduate students are those who have previously earned baccalaureate degrees and:

- Do not wish to pursue a graduate program leading to an advanced degree at the University; and
- Do not meet graduate degree admission requirements for full or provisional admission or have not completed matriculation requirements.

Application of credits toward a graduate degree is not applied to any degree until the applicant has been accepted to the specific program.

Graduate Degree Program Admission Status

Admission status to a specific graduate program is described below. The admission date for full or provisional determines the program's graduation requirements unless University regulations and policies affecting the graduate programs are changed.

Full Admission to Graduate Program (Matriculated)

- Applicant has met all University and specific program admission requirements.
- The program admission date determines the specified program and graduation requirements for that catalog unless University regulations affecting the program are changed.

Provisional Admission Status to a Graduate Program

Provisional admission may be granted to an applicant who:

- Has not satisfied the program's minimum requirements for full admission; and
- Lacks certain basic undergraduate courses required in the major field, which must be satisfied before full admission.

The candidate must meet the identified provisions before Full admission to the specific program.

- Provisions, as stated in the admission's letter from the Office of Graduate Studies, must be removed within the specified time period or provisional status will be rescinded and the student will be moved to non-degree seeking, non-matriculated status.
- The admission date determines the specific program and graduation requirements as outlined in the catalog.

Denied Admissions to A Graduate Program

Applicants who are denied Full or Provisional admission may reapply to the program. Upon an admission's denial, the applicant will be classified as a non-degree seeking, non-matriculated graduate student.

Appeal Procedures

Graduate admissions exceptions may be requested through petition forms and procedures available in the Office of Graduate Studies. Petitions and requested waivers are reviewed in a timely manner by the program faculty and the Graduate Council. Students are notified by mail of the disposition of the appeal. In some cases, the appeal or petition may be forwarded to the University's Admissions and Standards Committee. Students have due process rights to appeal any decisions about admission or other academic policies to the Provost's Office.

Graduate Student Responsibilities

Montana State University-Northern bestows substantial freedom on graduate students to monitor their own program requirements. University regulations, programs, curricula, and fee schedules are subject to change without notice, and graduate students in degree programs are responsible for meeting requirements and procedural standards. Failure to be informed does not excuse a student from responsibility or from any sanction, penalty or difficulty which may be encountered.

Advising

Upon admission to a specific program, the Office of Graduate Studies will assign the student a major advisor who will assist in planning a degree program to meet the individual's program objectives. Students must confer with their major advisor prior to registering for classes.

The student's major advisor must recommend approval of all transfer course work or substitutions for courses requested by the graduate student. Official transcripts and course syllabi must accompany all requests for coursework not taken at the University.

Transfer Credits

A maximum of 25% of the required credit hours to complete the degree may be fulfilled by eligible graduate-level transfer courses. Courses accepted for transfer credit must have been earned at the graduate level from an accredited institution and carry a letter grade of "B" or better. Courses which carry grades such as "P" or "S" are unacceptable for transfer credit. All transfer courses must be approved by the program faculty at the time of matriculation and recency requirements. Courses older than 7 years may not be transferred if out of a graduate degree earned by the applicant.

Policies Governing Use of Special Topics or Independent Study Courses

A syllabus must be approved by the student's major advisor for each independent study course or special topics course to be applied to a graduate program.

Independent study courses are not intended to take the place of, or to cover the same material as courses regularly offered in the graduate program. They are to be employed for investigations into subject matter in greater depth than offered in regular courses or into material not offered in regular courses. A maximum of six (6) credits of special topics or independent study coursework may be applied to the graduate degree.

In exceptional situations, when an independent study course or special topics course can be or is intended to substitute for a regular course in the catalog, the independent study or special topics course will be exempt from this policy and it will fulfill the program requirement for the identified course in the graduate program.

Credit Earned Before Matriculation (Undergraduate)

Up to 10 semester-hours of graduate level course credits earned by Montana State University-Northern students, or the credits completed in the first full-time semester prior to degree matriculation, may be applied toward a graduate degree.

Non-Matriculated

Students are considered "non-matriculated" when they have not been accepted into a specific graduate program by the first day of the semester in which they are registered.

Non-matriculated applicants who apply for and are denied admission to a specific program may continue in non-degree status. All coursework taken as a non-matriculated graduate student will not fulfill graduate program degree requirements if the candidate is denied admission to the specific program.

A maximum of 25% of graduate credits earned as a non-matriculated student may apply toward the specific graduate program's degree requirements upon full or provisional admission to the program.

Credit Load

A student may carry up to 12 credits of graduate coursework in any semester. A full-time course load for graduate students is nine credit hours. For the purposes of calculating a full-time load for a student taking a combination of graduate and undergraduate courses, full session courses, half session course, short-term workshops and interim sessions, a prorated calculation using 12 credits for full load will be utilized.

Standards of Scholarship

The University expects its graduate students to maintain high standards of scholarship. Graduate students must maintain a minimum 3.00 grade point average.

- A maximum of three (3) credits of C level work may be applied to the master's degree program. (See specific programs for course limitations.)
- A student who fails to maintain a 3.00 grade point average will be placed on probation at the end of the term the grade point average falls below 3.00. If by the end of the following term the graduate student has not raised the grade point average to 3.00 or above, the student will be dismissed from the graduate program and from further study at the University.
- Students receiving a grade of "C", "D", or "F" may repeat the course one time; the original grade shall remain on the transcript and be computed in the cumulative GPA. (See specific programs for limitations.)
- Candidates who receive an "incomplete" for a class must complete the course requirements by the end of the following semester or they will receive an "F".
- Practicum and internship courses require grades of B or better. Any grade below a B demands review of the candidate's performance before the respective course can be re-taken.

A student who fails to meet the program standards may be placed on probation, suspended from graduate study, or dismissed from the University. Decisions on such matters will be made by the Graduate Council in consultation with the appropriate advisor and program faculty. A student who is suspended from a graduate program or dismissed from the University may, through the petition procedure, request a review of the case by the Provost.

Admission to the University

Students must apply to the University:

1. Complete application to the University as a graduate student.
2. Provide proof of immunizations.
3. Submit official transcripts indicating an earned bachelor's degree for an accredited institution.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission as a degree or certificate/endorsement seeking graduate student is granted when the student has satisfied the requirements listed below.

1. **Scholarship**
 - a. At the time of application, the student must demonstrate adequate proficiency in oral and written communication and have a cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or above; all graduate coursework taken at Montana State University-Northern or other institutions must be earned at a B or better to be applied toward the master's degree.
2. **Removal of Deficiencies**
 - a. Any deficiencies in the student's undergraduate program (identified at the time of admission to graduate studies) must be removed before making application for Admission to Candidacy for a master's degree. Other program specific deficiencies must be removed before full Admissions to Candidacy in a program.
3. **Admission to Program of Study**
 - a. Upon admission as a degree-seeking (or endorsement seeking) student, a program advisor is assigned. The Office of Graduate Studies will provide the admission materials for the specific program. Contact the Office of Graduate Studies for other admission requirements specific to the program, and program plans for each program.
 - b. As part of the application for matriculation, each student is responsible for adhering to the program of study for the specific degree and following the sequence of courses toward completion of the program each semester. The program of study for each program meets all graduation

requirements and will be kept in the Office of Graduate Studies. Subsequent modifications to coursework or program requirements must be approved by the program faculty.

- c. Students must be continuously enrolled in the degree program or apply for and receive approval to interrupt enrollment for each semester the student plans on not attending.
- d. Students must be actively enrolled in the semester they expect to graduate or complete exit requirements.

Comprehensive Exit Examinations/Requirements

Students shall complete program specific exit requirements which are conducted during the last semester of enrollment or the semester immediately following coursework completion. Exit requirements consist of extensive review of competencies in professional practice, knowledge and understanding and may include both written and oral components. Candidates shall notify their advisor and the Office of Graduate Studies of their intention to complete exit requirements and to review their application for graduation the semester prior to planned completion.

The student's major advisor generally serves as the chairperson of the Comprehensive Exit Examination/Requirements Committee. This committee administers the comprehensive examination for each degree candidate and shall assign a "pass" or "fail" for the comprehensive evaluation based on its determination of the candidate's competence.

Application for Graduation

A candidate for the master's degree must file an application for graduation with the Registrar's Office at least one semester prior to the semester in which the work for the degree is anticipated to be completed. In addition, the student's advisor must indicate approval for graduation to Graduate Studies. For Counselor Education, students must apply for graduation prior to first internship semester.

Requirements for Graduation

- Application for graduation has been timely submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- All courses required in the specific program must have been satisfactorily completed.
- The candidate for graduation must have a "B" (3.00) cumulative grade point average in the program; no more than three hours of "C" work will be accepted toward completion of the degree. See program of study for program specific requirements.
- The candidate for graduation must have satisfactorily completed the exit requirements.
- All credits applied to the master's degree must be earned within seven years prior to the awarding of the degree.
- A minimum residency of 75% of required credits in the degree program is required. A maximum of 25% of the credits may be transferred from other accredited institutions provide they meet all criteria and have received approval from the candidate's major advisor.

Conferring of Degrees

Although the completion of a degree is posted on the student's transcript at the end of the semester in which it was earned, diplomas are conferred only at the conclusion of Spring Semester with commencement exercises held on campus.

Time Limits for Graduation

All coursework presented for graduation must be earned within seven years from date of Full or Provisional admission to a graduate program. This policy covers coursework completed at the University or transferred from another institution prior to receiving admission to the program.

Master of Education (MEd) Degree in Counselor Education

The Counselor Education Program prepares graduate candidates to be effective counselors in a dynamic profession and society. The Program provides a strong academic program which provides candidates the needed knowledge base and counseling skills necessary to work with a diversity of clients. Through identification with the counseling profession, its Code of Ethics, and its organizations, the student will develop a strong counselor identity. Additionally, the profession believes that graduate candidates must be open to self-reflection and self-challenge to gain and use the personal dispositions necessary to work in a multicultural society.

The Counselor Education Program supports the mission of Montana State University-Northern to provide quality undergraduate and graduate programs. These programs are designed to meet the needs of rural, underserved, and culturally diverse populations. The department supports alternative and blended delivery of the program (residential, off-campus, and online) to reach stakeholders and strengthen collaborative community partnerships for school, community, and other counseling related professions. The Counselor Education faculty maintain the highest degree of preparation and employ best pedagogic strategies and clinical practices.

Program Mission Statement

The Counselor Education Program prepares counselors who have developed sound practical skills through experiential learning; who have acquired a comprehensive theoretical knowledge base; who hold a strong counselor identity; and who possess the personal dispositions necessary to work in various professional settings with diverse clientele.

Program Outcomes

The Counselor Education Program believes it has responsibilities to current graduate candidates and to their future clients. Additionally, the department believes it has a responsibility to collaborate with the communities within which it works, to continue to grow as a program, and to model professional involvement and identity.

The Program Objectives

1. The program will prepare and graduate skilled, knowledgeable, self-aware and self-reflective counselors who are prepared academically to seek licensure.
2. The program will support faculty to collaborate with the community, its agencies and schools, to aid in learning opportunities for graduate students.
3. The program will continually evaluate the curriculum, practices, and requirements to promote the highest quality education.
4. The program will support faculty to model professional identity through involvement in professional organizations, attaining leadership positions.

Graduate Candidate Competencies

1. The graduate candidate implements sound practical therapeutic and relational skills that reflect current practice.
2. The graduate candidate possesses a comprehensive theoretical knowledge base that can be integrated and transferred to effective counseling relationships and techniques.
3. The graduate candidate expresses a strong counselor identity through involvement and participation in professional organizations, advocacy, trainings, workshops, seminars, or other continuing education opportunities.
4. The graduate candidate demonstrates a self-aware and self-reflective stance that allows for growth and the personal dispositions necessary to work in the counseling field.

Master of Science in Education (MSEd) Degree in Instruction and Learning

The Instruction and Learning program is offered in an on-line with residency cohort format. The program is designed to support the improvement of instruction and learning in a variety of professional learning environments (e.g., schools, private industry, government agencies, non-profits, etc.).

The Instruction and Learning Program supports the mission of Montana State University Northern to provide quality undergraduate and graduate programs. The Instruction and Learning Program prepares graduate candidates to be effective reflective practitioners in an educational environment. The Program provides a strong academic program which provides candidates the needed knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to work with a diversity of learners. Additionally, the profession believes that graduate candidates must be open to self-reflection and self-challenge to gain and use the personal dispositions necessary to work in a multicultural society. These programs are designed to meet the needs of rural, underserved, and culturally diverse populations. The department supports alternative and blended delivery of the program (online with residency) to reach stakeholders and strengthen instruction and learning in a wide range of professional learning environments (K-12, business and industry, governmental and non-governmental agencies) The Instruction and Learning faculty maintain a high degree of professionalism and are continually engaging in professional experiences to improve the learning of our graduate students.

Program Mission Statement

The Instruction and Learning Program mission is firmly grounded in a vision of and commitment to learning environments in which all learners have access to educational opportunities, choices, and experiences that enable them to achieve at the peak of their potential. The professional education programs are designed for delivery through innovative and efficacious systems that provide professional development and excellent educational experiences to diverse populations in a geographically and economically challenged region. To this end, we provide a variety of rich, intentional, and meaningful experiences designed to support candidates' development of appropriate dispositions, knowledge, skills, traits and habits for their fields. Through this educational experience, graduate candidates prepare to impact students' lives and learning and to take leadership roles in classrooms, schools, and beyond.

Program Responsibilities

The Instruction and Learning Program believes it has responsibilities to current graduate candidates and to their future clients. Additionally, the faculty believes it has a responsibility to collaborate with the communities within which it works, to continue to grow as a program, and to model professional involvement and identity.

The Program Outcomes

1. The program will prepare and graduate candidates capable of identifying and analyzing contemporary issues in education and examine their effect on instructional practice in culturally responsive learning environment.
2. The program will prepare and graduate candidates capable of conducting classroom action research using quantitative and qualitative methods in your classroom, school district and community to improve instruction and learning.
3. The program can document the effects of instruction of students using assessment and evaluation methodologies that accurately reflect student performance.

4. The program will prepare and graduate candidates that demonstrate critical thinking, creative thinking, reflective thinking and self-regulation in a professional decision-making capacity using learning theories in instructional practice.
5. The program will prepare and graduate candidates that demonstrate and promote the integration of technology to enhance curricular and instructional design, implementation and evaluation.

Graduate Candidate Competencies

1. The graduate candidate applies and implements sound practical changes in their professional practice based upon theoretical and applied research which demonstrates improved instruction and learning.
2. The graduate candidate possesses a comprehensive theoretical knowledge base that can be integrated and transferred to effective instructional environments and student relationships.
3. The graduate candidate expresses a strong continuous learner identity through involvement and participation in professional organizations, advocacy, trainings, workshops, seminars, or other continuing education opportunities which improves instruction and learning for all.
4. The graduate candidate demonstrates a self-aware and self-reflective stance that allows for growth and the personal dispositions necessary to work in the professional education environment.