

Graduate Student Handbook

INTRODUCTION

The New Mexico Tech Catalog contains the requirements and many of the procedures related to graduate study at New Mexico Tech. The following resource is intended to be a guide to the implementation of these requirements and procedures, and is directed primarily to academic considerations. Students should consult the New Mexico Tech *Student Handbook* for matters related to rights and responsibilities of students, general campus rules, conduct and citizenship, NMT offices and services, recreational activities, and academic services. Note that disciplinary actions related to graduate students are directed to the Graduate Dean rather than the Dean of Students (undergraduate).

Sections below outline steps related to your first year of studies, what you must do to maintain satisfactory academic progress, how you will design the program leading to your degree, time limits placed on your studies, and the completion of final requirements. Answers to many of your questions can come from a careful review of the contents. Even so, you will be left with questions related to how your degree will be completed. As these questions occur, please direct them immediately to your advisor or to the Graduate Office.

FIRST YEAR IN THE NMT GRADUATE PROGRAM

Preliminary, Qualifying and Entrance Examinations

Several of Tech's graduate programs require and administer examinations to new students, primarily as an advising tool. The section on [Special Examinations by Department](#) provides some information on departmental requirements. You should direct inquiries about specifics for these examinations to the relevant graduate program.

Choosing an Advisor and Advisory Committee

When you are first admitted to a graduate program, the department head or an appointed faculty member will serve as your temporary advisor. Your temporary advisor will help you with identifying the members of your formalized committee. If you are a distance student, you may contact the [EODI Office](#) for assistance - particularly with collecting signatures for the forms. After admission and before the end of your second semester, full-time graduate students must select and [formalize](#) an advisor and advisory committee. Part-time and distance education students must formalize their committees by the time they complete 12 credits. Your advisor should be a faculty member whose interests and specialties coincide with yours. Generally your advisor serves as both academic and research advisor; however, under some circumstances, the research advisor and academic advisor may be different people. Your academic advisor must be a regular faculty member (tenure track) in your department and it is the academic advisor who will serve as the head of your advisory committee. Your research advisor is responsible for guiding you to the completion of your research project and for supervision of the preparation of your research report (thesis, dissertation or independent study paper).

Besides helping you with your research, your advisor will help you select your advisory committee. If you plan to have separate academic and research advisors, consult with both of them to select the rest of your advisory committee. Regular faculty members from your department may not be in the minority, and all the members should have some proficiency in the area of your research interests.

There is no upper limit for the number of members on your advisory committee; however, keep in mind that the more people there are on your committee, the harder it will be to arrange meeting times for everyone. If you find later that there are more appropriate choices for your committee, or if your research interests and directions change, you may, with the concurrence of your department, reconstitute your committee. Your advisory committee should serve as your first set of personal resources when you need assistance. Feel free to approach them, or any other faculty member, when looking for advice.

The Graduate Dean and the head of a department are *ex officio* members of all advisory committees for graduate students in the department. This means that your department head must also approve your work in order for you to graduate. While your advisory committee guides your research, final approval rests with the head of your department and the Graduate Dean. Make sure your department head is kept informed of your progress.

M.S. Advisory Committee

Your master's degree advisory committee must have at least three faculty members: at least two are regular faculty in your department and a third member who may be from outside your department. After you have selected your advisor and committee, complete your graduate committee form in banweb. After you log into banweb, select "Student and Financial Aid", then "Graduate Forms", then complete form at "Initial Form - Graduate Advisory Committee". Make sure that you select "Thesis" or "Independent Study" for your study option. The Committee can be changed on the other form on the same page.

To guarantee that you have the tools to complete your research, your advisory committee will help you choose the courses to be used for your **degree program**. They will also approve your thesis topic and serve at your thesis defense. It is your responsibility to call meetings of your committee **at least** once a year.

Ph.D. Advisory Committee

The doctoral advisory committee must have at least four faculty members: your academic advisor, at least two regular faculty members from your department, and a third member who may be from outside your department. In addition, the Graduate Dean assigns an outside observer who is charged to be impartial. Once all advisory committee members have been selected, complete your graduate committee form in banweb. After you log into banweb, select "Student and Financial Aid", then "Graduate Forms", then complete form at "Initial Form - Graduate Advisory Committee". Make sure that you select "Dissertation" for your study option. The Committee can be changed on the other form on the same page.

Your advisory committee will help you choose courses to guarantee sufficient background for your proposed research and for the candidacy examination. They will administer the candidacy examination, approve your dissertation proposal, supervise your research and serve at the defense of your dissertation. Although the committee will assist in directing your studies, it is your responsibility to call meetings of your committee **at least** once a year.

Advisory Committee Report Form

The first thing you present to your advisory committee after it is formalized should be your course program. This is a study plan for your degree. First, list all the courses you have taken as shown on

your transcript (be sure to include the credit hours and grades for each course) and then list all the courses you plan to take, including your thesis, independent study, or dissertation credits. Your committee will consider modifications to your list where there are courses that might be more appropriate for your proposed course of study. Once the course program is acceptable, the committee will indicate its approval by initialing and dating your list. Your course program can be altered, at anytime, with the concurrence of the advisory committee, department chair and Dean of Graduate Studies. This form at the time of graduation must match exactly courses listed on your transcript. The Course Program for full-time students must be on file before the end of the second semester. Part-time and distance education students must have their Course Program on file by the time they complete 12 credits.

Choosing a Thesis, Dissertation or Independent Study Topic

Masters degree students in some departments have the option of completing either a thesis or an independent study as part of their degree. In other departments, the independent study option is not available. You must consult the NMT Catalog to see if the independent study option is available to you. Selection of either of these options begins with completion and approval of your [Report of the M.S. Advisory Committee](#). Since each option has different course requirements, the courses listed on your course program must conform to the option you want to use. Should you later decide to change (from thesis to independent study or vice versa), you do so by submitting a revised and approved course program.

You will be spending many hours working on your research. Your advisor and advisory committee must be involved in the selection, preparation, revision and approval of all research/independent study proposals, and theses/dissertations/independent study papers. If you are on a research assistantship, the research you are working on may or may not be the subject of your thesis or independent study.

The report of your research (thesis, independent study, dissertation) must be legally available for publication. As is the case throughout the United States, New Mexico Tech is increasingly involved in contract research for corporations and governmental entities and many times portions of these research projects are proprietary in nature. While a **research assistant** may complete conditions of employment by working on proprietary projects, there must be a prior understanding between the student, advisory committee and funding source (corporation) regarding precisely what will be available for the student's thesis or independent study, and what will not be available. Please speak with your advisor **and** the Dean of Graduate Studies **before** you commit to a project that involves proprietary material.

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

Continuous Registration

If you are admitted to a degree program, you are required to maintain continuous enrollment until you have completed the degree. You may not elect to take a semester off, even if all you have to complete is writing your thesis. Under certain circumstances, you may qualify for a [Leave of Absence](#) of a semester.

Course Loads

As a full-time graduate student (regular or provisional) you are required to register for at least nine credit hours in the fall and spring semesters until certified for your degree. If you have an assistantship, you must register for twelve credit hours.

The first twelve credits of courses for which regular and provisional students register must be upper division or graduate-level; these credits must be approved by your advisory committee and applicable to your degree. Exceptions, particularly lower level courses (see [Lower Level Courses](#)), require prior written approval from your academic advisor, your department head, and the Graduate Dean. A thirteenth credit may be taken without completing the Lower Level permission form and without being assessed additional tuition (i.e., graduate students may take a physical recreation, health & wellness, or fine arts class).

Special approval is required to register for more than thirteen credit hours -- see your academic advisor or the Graduate Office for more information. You should be aware that you will be responsible for the extra tuition and fees for registration in excess of thirteen credit hours. If you are in residence (using the facilities, staff or faculty of the Institute while progressing toward your degree) during the summer session, you must register for six credits (full-time summer registration).

Part-time graduate students (regular or provisional) must register each semester, but for eight or fewer credits per semester.

Summer Registration Requirements and Employment

New Mexico Tech requires that graduate students register for the summer semester *if they are 'in residence'*. You are in residence if you are making progress toward your degree or using the facilities (i.e., library, computers, lab, office) or staff (i.e., advisor, committee) of the Institute. If you will be receiving an assistantship, fellowship, or other support that is disbursed to you through Tech, you must register.

If you are: 1) **not in residence for the summer** (see above), but you are 2) **pre-registered** as a full time student **for the Fall semester**, you may qualify for a Work Authorization (on-campus employment up to 40 hours per week) for the summer. Your academic advisor must indicate that, to the best of his or her knowledge, the on-campus employment is unrelated to degree progress and that you will not be using the facilities or staff of the Institute during the summer semester. The job may be related to the degree program, but not directly related to the your personal degree progress or research project.

Domestic graduate assistants may be registered full-time and carry full-time (40 hour) contracts during the summer session. Because of restrictions imposed upon international students by the federal government, they may not have contracts for more than 20 hours per week in the summer if registered full-time. Contracts for international students may be written for up to 60% more per pay period than was paid during the preceding Spring semester to permit working for more than 20 hours per week between sessions (before and after summer session).

Students may also consider summer off-campus employment. If you decide to take the summer off from your studies and get a job in an area unrelated to your interests, you don't need to register. If you are working off-campus on a summer job that **is related** to completion of your degree (i.e., at a

research lab at Sandia, Los Alamos, or even a private company like Intel) you are required to be registered.

Lower Level Courses

Generally, you will be granted permission to register for lower level courses if they are pertinent to your graduate program; however, these courses may not be used toward your graduate requirements. You are required to return and have approved by the Graduate Dean a completed "[Lower Level Class Approval](#)" form to the Graduate Office before taking a lower level course.

Graduate students who are registered for 12 credits of approved coursework for a given semester, may register for a 13th credit of classes **without** completing the Lower Level permission (i.e., graduate students may take a physical recreation, health & wellness, or fine arts class).

Registration Checked

The Graduate Office must approve your registration each semester. Approval of your registration may be delayed if any of your forms are late, missing, or if there are discrepancies in your records. Be sure to inform the Graduate Office of all changes. Within one week after the close of registration, the Graduate Office will check your registration. **Failure to have your registration approved in its final form can lead to the cancellation of all forms of financial aid.**

You may audit up to three credit hours a semester, but because audits are not graded, they cannot be used toward the 30 credit hours required for graduation. Similarly, community college and physical recreation courses may not be used to complete degree requirements. It is up to you and your academic advisor to see that you meet requirements and that your progress is updated on the "[Report of the Advisory Committee](#)" form. The form must be present at each advisory committee meeting -- get it from the Graduate Office before, and return it after, each meeting.

Leave of Absence

All regular graduate students are required to register every Fall and Spring semester and in [Summer semesters when in residence](#) until certified for their degree. Occasionally factors make it necessary for you to interrupt your studies for a short period of time. If you find yourself in one of these situations, you may request a leave of absence *if you are in good academic standing and have written approval from your adviser, the department head, and the Graduate Dean*. There is no established form for a leave request. The leave request may be a memo or letter on paper or in digital form (an email). The request must include an explanation for why the leave is needed, and a time frame (calendar) for completion of each remaining degree requirement. This should be routed to the Dean of Graduate Studies via the advisor and department with endorsements added by each.

During your leave of absence, you do not have access to the staff (your advisor and committee members) or facilities of the institute, and it is assumed that you are not progressing towards your Tech graduate degree. Normally leaves are approved for one semester at a time and you should plan to request and justify a leave of absence for each additional semester away. If you take a leave of absence, your assistantship will not necessarily be held for you. You should consult with your department and supervisor for to discuss possible arrangements for support on your return.

If a student does not register as required and no leave of absence is requested or such leave expires, you will be removed from your graduate program for failure to enroll. After such failure to enroll, you must apply for [readmission](#) if you wish to resume your graduate program.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Each semester, and at the end of your course of study, you must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress.

- Regular, full-time graduate students must register for and complete nine or more credit hours during regular (fall or spring) semesters. If you have an appointment (research or teaching assistantship), you must register for and complete 12 credit hours during each regular semester. When in residence during the summer session, satisfactory academic progress requires the completion of six credit hours. The courses used for satisfactory progress must be completed with a GPA of 3.0 or above and no grade less than "C" in any course attempted and the required credit hours completed can not include courses such as physical recreation, health & wellness, and fine arts.
- Regular, part-time graduate students demonstrate satisfactory academic progress with the completion of from one to eight credit hours, with a GPA of 3.0 or above, and no grade less than "C" in any course attempted.
- If you have not formalized your [committee](#) by the end of your second semester of registration, you are not making satisfactory academic progress.
- If you have not established your [Course Program](#) by the end of your second semester of registration or fail to meet the other required deadlines for your degree, you are not making satisfactory academic progress.

If you are judged to be making unsatisfactory academic progress, you will be placed on warning. Any student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress for two consecutive semesters will be dropped from regular graduate student status. Such students *may* [request](#) special (non-degree) status *without* financial support. After completion of nine credit hours within a single semester in courses approved for the degree program with a grade-point average of 3.0 or better and no grade less than C, the special graduate student may petition the department for return to regular graduate status.

Special graduate students who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress for two consecutive semesters, will be suspended; they will not be readmitted for a minimum of one year.

When you have completed your studies, your cumulative GPA (calculated on all of the courses attempted while a graduate student at Tech) must be at least 3.0 and you may have no grade less than C. You must retake any course for which you receive a grade lower than C- before you can graduate. Except for thesis (591), dissertation (595) and independent study (590) credits, courses taken on an S/U basis will not be calculated into your GPA, nor will they count towards the credit hours you need to graduate.

Your progress will also be judged based on your performance on research projects. Departments may review the academic progress of graduate students and their decisions may range from "satisfactory" to a "recommendation for dismissal."

Thesis, Dissertation and Independent Study Grades

Assuming that you meet the minimum expectations agreed upon with your advisor, thesis (591), dissertation (595) and independent study (590) credits will be graded "PR". If you do not meet the expectations of your advisor, you will receive a "U" and such credits will not apply to meeting degree requirements. Directed research (500) credits are graded with an S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory). You should provide your advisor with a progress report at the end of each semester. Some departments have standard progress report forms.

Warning Letters

If you fail to make satisfactory progress during a semester, you will receive a warning letter (academic probation) from the Graduate Office. If you fail to make satisfactory academic progress in a second, consecutive semester, you will be placed on academic suspension and be dropped from your graduate degree program. If your warning or suspension was prompted by not registering for sufficient credits while on a contract, you will *not* be eligible for a contract in your next full-time semester. See the section on, "[Changing Student Classification](#)," for more information on your alternatives.

STUDENT CLASSIFICATION

Graduate students at New Mexico Tech may be divided into those who are admitted to graduate degree programs (regular and provisional students) and those who are not (special graduate students). Degree-seeking students may be admitted as either full-time or part-time students. Degree-seeking students must maintain continuous enrollment or they will need to be readmitted to complete their degree program(see [readmission](#)).

Distance Graduate Students

Distance graduate students are those who have been admitted to one of the graduate degree granting programs that New Mexico Tech offers via distance delivery. Such students are part-time regular students with respect to all requirements.

Regular Graduate Students

Regular graduate students are those who have been admitted to one of the graduate degree granting programs at New Mexico Tech.

Provisional Students

Students may be admitted provisionally if their undergraduate work is deficient in breadth or depth.

Typically, departments and programs will detail the deficiencies that must be remedied. Provisional student status is temporary, normally lasting for a single semester or two. Provisional students who make satisfactory academic progress in a graduate program are encouraged to apply for regular student status. Assistantships are not available to provisional students.

Full-time (Regular or Provisional) Students

A regular graduate student who is admitted as a full-time student must enroll for nine to twelve credit hours each semester, or six credit hours in the summer session. Regular graduate students receiving financial support are required to register for twelve credit hours. Any regular, full-time graduate student in good standing is eligible for financial support. Regular graduate students not receiving financial support may register for as few as nine credit hours. See [Course Loads](#) for more specific requirements.

Part-Time (Regular or Provisional) Students

Applicants who are employed or have other responsibilities that limit the time available for study may be considered for admission as part-time students. A regular part-time graduate student is one enrolled for between one and eight credit hours per semester or between one and three credit hours in the summer session. Regular, part-time graduate students are not eligible for financial aid.

Special Student

Special students are non-degree students and as such are not enrolled in a graduate degree program. Special students wishing to become regular or provisional graduate students must apply to a graduate program. Either the Graduate Dean serves as adviser to special students, or the Dean may assign an advisor.

If you are attending New Mexico Tech as a special student, there are certain differences from the regular graduate program of which you should be aware. First, you cannot register for more than nine credit hours in either the fall or spring semester or for more than six in the summer. In addition, should you apply for admission and be admitted to a graduate degree program at New Mexico Tech, only twelve credit hours of the work completed as a special graduate student may be applied towards your degree. You are strongly encouraged to work closely with the chair of the department to which you intend to apply to maximize your success.

Dual Registration

Dual registered students are enrolled as both an undergraduate student and as a graduate student. Students may come to be regarded as "Dual Registered" in either of two ways.

1. Any qualified student may apply for dual registration status for their last semester as an undergraduate student. This approach is limited to undergraduate students who are: a) within nine credit hours of completing their bachelor's degree; b) have a GPA of 3.0 or better; c) will complete their undergraduate work in the first semester as a graduate student; and d) have been admitted as a regular student to a graduate program at Tech. Students approved for dual registration must complete their bachelor's degree in the first semester of the graduate program or they will be dropped from the graduate degree program until they have completed their bachelor's degree. After completing their undergraduate work, students with dual registration automatically become regular graduate students. When more than one department is involved, the student must also obtain the approval of the department granting the undergraduate degree.
2. It is crucial that students involved in any of the Five-Year M.S. programs become integrated into the graduate program no later than the beginning of their senior year. To do so as a dual registered student, the student must be following an approved course program that will permit them to receive their B.S. degree at the end of their senior year and their masters degree at the end of the year following. In addition, the dual registered student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0, and a 3.0 earned grade point average in mathematics, science, and engineering

courses. When more than one department is involved, the student must also have the approval of the department granting the undergraduate degree before dual registration status is approved.

Transfer Student

A student transferring into the graduate program at New Mexico Tech is treated much like any other new admission. Transfer students may petition to have up to twelve credit hours of appropriate work taken at another accredited institution applied to their degree at New Mexico Tech.

For work at another institution to qualify for transfer credit, the student must have earned at least a B and the work *may not have been used to satisfy the requirements for a previously earned degree*. To be applied towards the student's course program at Tech, these courses must meet with the approval of the student's advisory committee; no courses below 300-level may be transferred for a graduate degree.

CHANGING STUDENT CLASSIFICATION

From Part-time to Full-time

If you are in good standing (cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and not on warning), you may petition the Graduate Office to be changed from part-time to full-time. Your petition should bear the endorsements of your advisor and department chair.

From Full-time to Part-time

We place a great deal of importance on getting our graduate students through their programs quickly as full-time students so that they can get on with their careers. **Your chances of earning your degree are dramatically reduced if you depart Tech before you have completed all requirements and your completion is signed off.**

Changing to part-time status is not available as a mechanism to reduce your registration:

- near the end of your studies or while you are writing your thesis.
- so that you may take employment before degree completion.

There is an accommodation provided for one semester of reduced registration for a full-time student who's financial support has run out at the end of their studies. A full-time graduate student in good standing who has two or more years of residence, has completed all course work, has filed an [Intent to Graduate](#), and who has no work authorization, assistantship, or fellowship support, may elect to register for as few as three credit hours of thesis, independent study, or dissertation in their last semester. A full-time student in this situation who wishes to qualify for a work authorization only, must register for at least six credit hours with the approved reduced registration. If you wish to take advantage of this accommodation, come to the graduate office to complete a reduced registration form.

It may, however, happen that your schedule for completing the graduate degree is confounded along the way by other responsibilities or circumstances beyond your control. If financial requirements for employment or changes in family responsibilities mean that you might better complete your degree as a part-time student you may request a change in your status. If you are in good standing (cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and not on warning), you may petition the Graduate Office to be changed from full-time to part-time. To receive consideration, your petition should explain in detail

why you find it necessary to prolong your studies. Your petition must bear the endorsements of your advisor and department chair.

From Provisional to Regular

After at least one semester of satisfactory academic progress, you may petition the Graduate Office for a change in status to regular graduate student. Ideally, your department will have specified the conditions required for admission to regular status at the time you were admitted to provisional status. Such specific conditions must be met prior to conversion to regular graduate student status. Your petition to the Graduate Office must be approved by the chair of your department.

From Regular to Special

If you have been dropped from your graduate program for academic reasons, you *may apply* to the Graduate Office for special (non-degree) student status. **This is not done automatically.**

From Special to Regular

If you were not previously in a graduate degree program at Tech, you must apply for regular admission and be accepted by the department where you would like to study.

If you seek readmission to a graduate degree program, your requirements for readmission depends on your status before you transitioned to special status, i.e., whether you were a full-time or part-time student. If you were full-time (part-time), you must first complete nine (four) credit hours within a single semester in courses approved for the degree program with a grade-point average of 3.0 or better and no grade less than C. Your petition for readmission will then be considered by the department you wish to rejoin. The request must be approved and endorsed by the department head before it will be considered by the Graduate Dean.

Changing Departments/Majors

If you are admitted to one program and later decide that you would like to change to another program, you may do so, but there are some requirements. If you make this decision **before** arriving on campus, you must ask that your application be sent to the new program for review and for an admission recommendation. If you make your decision after arriving on campus, your request will be considered **only after one semester of residence** in your original program. If you are then in good standing in your current program, you may transfer departments with the approval of your adviser, department head, and the Graduate Dean as long as the new program has granted you admission. This typically requires a new application.

Should you wish to change departments after being dropped from a program, you must wait one semester before the new department may consider your application. During this waiting period, you may enroll in classes at New Mexico Tech only as a special student. Remember that all courses taken as a graduate student and the grades earned, even those from the department that dropped you, impact your eligibility for receiving your graduate degree.

Readmission

If you abandoned your studies and were dropped from a graduate program at Tech, you may return to those studies only after successfully seeking readmission to the program. In the readmission process, you should expect to provide all of the information required of any applicant. The

department may or may not admit you. If you are readmitted, you should expect to be required to follow the *current* catalog requirements, which may include course work and/or research beyond that expected of under your original catalog.

STUDIES LEADING TO THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

Choosing Courses

In some departments you may earn your master's degree by doing either a thesis or independent study. The exceptions are chemistry, biology, and materials engineering, which do not have an independent study option. Both thesis and independent study approaches require that you write a paper, but the independent study option does not require you to publish or publicly defend the research, as is required by the thesis option. Both require a minimum of 30 credit hours, which are broken down as follows:

	Credits	Thesis Option	Independent Study Option
numbered 500 or above		12	15
numbered 300 or above		12	12
Theses or Independent Study		6	3
	Total:	30	30

At least six credit hours of approved courses must be from a department other than your major department. Your advisory committee will help you choose appropriate courses. If your previous degree was in another field or if you can otherwise demonstrate breadth in your previous work (beyond what is normally expected from B.S. degree programs in your field), your committee may recommend to the Graduate Dean that this requirement be waived. This recommendation must take the form of a memo from your committee, in which they detail the rationale for their recommendation. If this recommendation is not approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies, the recommendation will be automatically forwarded to the Graduate Council for consideration.

STUDIES LEADING TO THE DOCTORATE

Degree Requirements

Except for the requirement that all doctoral students complete twenty-four dissertation (595) credits after advancing to candidacy, there are no general requirements for the doctoral degree.

Requirements for formal course work vary with the department. Your advisory committee will recommend courses to you based on your qualifications, understanding of the field, and the research you propose to undertake. Typically, you will need 48 to 66 credit hours of course work beyond a bachelor's degree. If you already have your master's degree, you might expect to take 18 to 36 additional credit hours of course work for your doctorate. Check the catalog and your particular department for more details.

In addition, most programs expect substantial research contributions leading to multiple publications in respected conferences and/or journals.

Dissertation Proposal

Every doctoral student must prepare a dissertation proposal. One of the purposes of your dissertation proposal is to show your advisory committee that your proposed research is feasible within the constraints of time, equipment, and money. Another purpose is to demonstrate your understanding of the subject matter. Your proposal will be defended as part of the candidacy examination and its approval is one of the conditions of candidacy.

You should begin your dissertation proposal only after considerable discussion with your advisory committee, thorough literature review, and preliminary research. After acceptance, your dissertation will be available at the New Mexico Tech library and online to anyone who is interested, so be sure that the information constituting your research is not proprietary or confidential. If the information in your dissertation is not available for publication, the Graduate Dean will not accept your dissertation and you will not receive your degree.

Check with your advisor and committee regarding the style to be employed for your proposal. Ideally your proposal should be in the style of a proposal for the National Science Foundation or a similar funding agency appropriate for your field of study. Alternatively, you may use the same style and format as for the dissertation itself. Organize the proposal in the same way, and include the methods you are planning to use, the hypothesis you are hoping to prove or disprove, why the research will be significant, and a survey of available information related to your research.

You should submit your completed dissertation proposal no later than two weeks before your candidacy examination in order to give your advisory committee time to study it. During your candidacy examination, you may expect penetrating queries related to your dissertation proposal. You may rely on members of your committee to focus on areas of apparent weakness. Make sure you understand your material and its foundations well.

Candidacy Examination

In addition to departmental preliminary and qualifying examinations, every department has a candidacy examination that covers topics related to the dissertation proposal. Before this examination, you were referred to as a graduate student. After passing this examination, you will be a doctoral candidate and can begin working on your dissertation in earnest. The candidacy exam may not be scheduled before a minimum of one year of residence at New Mexico Tech, and should occur after completion of formal course work. The exam is typically given near the end of the second year of doctoral study.

The purpose of the candidacy examination is to establish your qualifications to undertake the proposed research. In addition to questions relating to the specifics of your proposal, you may also expect to be examined on more general topics related to your field. It will not be enough to merely memorize facts to pass this examination. You must show that you can think and use your thorough understanding of the field to address unique problems. It is appropriate for you to approach members of the candidacy examination for guidance on the conduct of the examination. Upon your successful completion of the candidacy exam, your "Report of PhD Advisory Committee" form is to

be updated by your committee to reflect the completion of this milestone. In addition, your Academic Advisor will need to recommend you for candidacy, which must be approved by the Graduate Dean for you to advance to candidacy.

Doctoral Candidacy

Once you have passed the candidacy examination, you are eligible for an increase in stipend, assuming that funds are available. Your faculty supervisor must recommend this increase and a revised Graduate Assistantship Appointment Form must be submitted. After passing the candidacy examination, you are required to complete at the very minimum 24 hours of dissertation credits (595) distributed over one year. Typically, the completion of dissertation research takes significantly longer than this minimum. During your last semester, you may take as few as three credit hours if you are not on support. You may not register for dissertation credit hours before passing the candidacy examination.

TIME LIMITS

Master's Degree

There are limits placed on your time here at New Mexico Tech. The master's degree represents at least 30 credit hours (including research) of approved courses beyond the bachelor's degree. A master's degree is traditionally regarded as a two-year degree, but your degree program might take longer. After your initial graduate enrollment, you have three years to complete your master's degree.

Doctorate

The doctoral program represents the equivalent of at least three years of full-time study and research. This normally requires from 48 to 66 credit hours of courses beyond the bachelor's degree and a minimum of 24 hours of dissertation credit. Typically, a doctoral degree takes significantly longer than this minimum. If you enter the doctoral program with a master's degree, you have up to five years to complete your degree; if you have not yet received your master's degree, you have seven years.

Extension of Degree Time Limits

[Extensions of these time limits](#) can be made in special cases, but only with approval by your Academic Advisor, your Department Head, the Graduate Dean. Time limits and extensions for part-time students are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Fellowship and Assistantship Support

Fellowships and assistantships have separate time limits. Admission to a Master's program comes with two years of eligibility for financial support, after which one must receive a master's degree before being eligible for additional support. Once you receive your master's degree or equivalent, your eligibility for an assistantship or fellowship may be extended another three years while you pursue your doctorate. Doctoral students are eligible for three years of support. [Petition for extensions of time limits](#) for support made to the Graduate Dean will be approved if the program supplying the support recommends doing so.

COMPLETING THE GRADUATE DEGREE

You must have made satisfactory academic progress and be a regular graduate student in good standing at the time of graduation.

Final Semester

If you are an unsupported graduate student in good standing who has completed two or more years in residence in your graduate program, finished your course work, and filed an [Intent to Graduate](#), you may register for as few as three credit hours of independent study, thesis or dissertation during your final semester at Tech. This level of registration will provide you with access to your committee for advising and degree approval, office space, laboratories, library services, computers and the like. If you fail to complete your degree during this semester, you will receive a warning and be required to register as a full time student during all subsequent terms. Make every effort to complete all of the requirements for your degree before you depart campus.

What If You Don't Quite Finish?

You are expected to complete **all** of the requirements for your degree (defense/IS approval, submission of abstract & completion papers, etc.) **before** the end of the semester. It is a corollary to "Murphy's Law" that things take longer to complete than expected. Your best strategy is to understand that and build a time buffer into your completion schedule. But let's say that even though you planned for delays, you find yourself defending in the last week of the semester and your committee gives you too many corrections to permit making the deadline for graduation. Since the monthly deadline is already placed as late as possible while allowing approval time for everyone up through the regents, there is no flexibility on this deadline. If your paperwork is late, your graduation date will be shifted to the next month.

The Graduate Office does, however, routinely permit students who have **passed their defense or received approval for their Independent Study** to turn in completion materials after the end of the semester up until the close of registration for the next semester. For this to apply, your advisor must send your defense report to the Graduate Office before the end of the semester. **It is important for you to understand that this extension period does *not* provide for your defense or for the approval of your IS.** If the semester ends and you have not defended or your IS report is not approved, **you must register for the next semester.**

Leaving Tech Before You are Finished

Some students are tempted to take a job or begin another degree before the defense of their thesis. Before you do so, give this careful thought. Most students find that at their new job or school, they want first to please their new boss or advisor. After a long day, it can be difficult to make progress on the degree you've walked away from. Remember that if you were admitted as a regular degree-seeking student, you must register every semester until certified for your degree. If you do not register for a semester, you are subject to the reapplication and [readmission](#) process. If you move out of state, you are subject to nonresident tuition. If you do decide to leave early, please come by the Graduate Office to speak with the Dean. There are some strategies that can save you a little time and a lot of money down the line.

Defense Fee Option

If you met the eight-week deadline (see [Thesis and Dissertation](#)) for getting a preliminary copy of your thesis, or dissertation to your advisor, but cannot schedule a defense before the end of the semester because one or more members of your committee are unavailable, you may qualify for the

"defense fee option." If you have no need of the Institute and committee services mentioned above, and you are able to complete your work before the close of registration for the following semester, you may pay a \$50.00 defense fee *in lieu* of registration. To qualify, your committee must first certify that they have judged your thesis to be defensible before the close of registration. For this to apply, your advisor must send this certification to the Graduate Office before the end of the semester. If you fail to satisfactorily complete all of the remaining requirements for your degree before the close of registration, you will be required to register for the semester, and to pay late registration and validation fees. Students considering these options should keep in mind that members of your advisory committee are not obliged to provide you with feedback on your research when school is not in session and when you are not registered.

Thesis and Dissertation

If you are completing a degree with a thesis or dissertation, you must submit a preliminary copy of your manuscript to your advisor at least *eight* weeks before the end of your final semester so that corrections and suggestions can be made. Ask your advisor whether (s)he prefers electronic or printed copies, but you must use double-spaced formatting to allow for edits. You can expect to get back the edited copy within two weeks. Some advisors edit your thesis more than once, so discuss the timeline and process preferred by your advisor and be prompt.

After your written thesis is completed to the satisfaction of your advisor, distribute a copy to all defense committee members. Distribute your thesis at least two weeks before your defense is scheduled so that your committee members will have adequate time to read it. Provide the thesis electronically or printed based on the preference of your committee members. The defense committee is usually the same as the advisory committee, but your department head is encouraged to attend as part of the defense committee. It is an expectation of the Graduate Program that all of the members of your committee be active participants in the defense. That does not necessarily mean that they are all physically present. For example, defenses can incorporate videoconferencing for individuals that cannot attend the defense in person. Thesis defenses are done orally; the defense committee will ask you detailed questions about your research. The presentation of your research at the defense must be open to the public, although the public may be excused for some portion of the examination. It is typical for other interested faculty to attend. After all questions have been answered, your defense committee will ask you to leave the room while they decide if your defense is acceptable. The decision does not usually take long and they will typically inform you of their decision immediately. Your advisor must send a defense report to the graduate office stating when you defended, how all committee members were present (e.g., in person or via video conference), and listing what changes are required for your thesis. This report is to be seen soon after the defense and you are to be copied so that you have a record of the required changes. The description of required changes may be a high level description of changes with significantly more detail provided to you verbally by the committee, so be prepared to take notes on what you must do. When you have made required changes and your committee accepts your thesis, make sure that all defense committee members, including your Department Head, sign the [M.S.](#) or [Ph.D.](#) "Report of the Advisory Committee" form. In some cases, the committee will agree to sign your form at the defense and leave it up to your advisor to verify that changes are made, so take your report from with you to the defense.

After the defense committee has approved the final copy of your thesis, you should submit three copies and the signed "Report of the M.S. Advisory Committee" or "Report of the Ph.D. Advisory

Committee" form to the Graduate Office. **The Graduate Office must have your thesis and paperwork at least two weeks before the end of the semester if you are to remain on the graduation list.** The Graduate Office requires that a copy of your abstract in digital (ASCII, text, rich-text or HTML) form be sent to graduate@nmt.edu. You must also deliver an electronic copy of thesis in a single file PDF format to the graduate office (e.g., bring it on a DVD). Your thesis becomes the property of New Mexico Tech; it is kept in the library and is distributed online. New Mexico Tech retains the rights to the information and the right to distribute copies on request. This means any information on your thesis will be publicly available. Because of this, **do not choose research of a confidential or proprietary nature as the subject of your thesis.** Your thesis will not be accepted without all your experimental procedures and data included, so be sure you will not run into a conflict.

Independent Study Paper

An independent study paper is very similar to a thesis. You will be expected to maintain the same standards of quality in your writing and thought as with a thesis and the members of your committee must approve of the final product. The paper need not conform to the format requirements of the Graduate Office.

After approval of the independent study paper, the signed "Report of the M.S. Advisory Committee" form must be **submitted to the Graduate Office at least two weeks before the end of the semester if you are to remain on the graduation list.** The Graduate Office requires that a copy of your abstract in digital (ASCII, text, rich-text or HTML) form be sent to graduate@nmt.edu.

The other differences between an independent study paper and a thesis are differences in processing. There is no defense required by the graduate program, but most departments require a presentation. In addition, your independent study paper will be kept by your advisor and not by the library, and consequently it is not bound or distributed by the library.

COMPLETING THE Ph.D.

In addition to the requirements listed above in "[Completing the Graduate Degree](#)", Ph.D. students must complete the following.

Research Seminar

As part of the requirements for a doctorate, you must present a seminar on part or all of your research to the public. This generally is scheduled for a time after you have passed your candidacy examination. Some departments may require you to present more than one seminar. The topic should be related to the dissertation research you are doing.

Submission of Journal Article

Another requirement is that you submit at least one paper to a refereed journal recognized in your field. The journal and your manuscript must be acceptable to your committee. The paper should be on the same subject as your dissertation, and in fact the substance of it may be incorporated into

your dissertation. You do not have to be the sole author of this paper (sometimes it is easier to get a paper accepted if a faculty member is also listed as an author). Presenting papers at a conference does not qualify, nor does publishing an abstract of a paper you presented. Remember to notify the Graduate Office after your paper has been submitted (there is a space on the "Ph.D. Advisory Committee Report" form for this).

Dissertation Defense

A dissertation defense is conducted in the same way as a thesis defense. After your academic advisor accepts your written dissertation, it is presented to your advisory committee and a dissertation defense is scheduled. All members of your advisory committee must attend, and usually your department head and the Graduate Dean will also attend. The defense is also open to the public-- feel free to ask your friends to show up. The time, date, place, and subject of your defense must be published in SCOPE one week in advance, and announcements of your defense must be posted around New Mexico Tech at least one week in advance.

At the defense, you should present the subject of your dissertation in the same manner as for the seminar. After your presentation is finished, your advisory committee will ask questions on details. Be prepared with a complete knowledge of all background material--knowing only your research will not be good enough. After the faculty members are finished asking questions, the audience may also ask questions about your presentation. When all questions are over, your advisory committee leaves the room and in a closed session decides whether or not you have earned your doctorate. Usually it doesn't take very long to make the decision. As soon as they have decided, they will let you know.

Make sure that your department head and all members of your advisory committee sign the "[Report of the Ph.D. Advisory Committee](#)" and include it with your dissertation when you turn it in to the Graduate Office.

SPECIAL EXAMS BY DEPARTMENT

Chemistry

All entering Chemistry graduate students must take a set of placement exams. These examinations are in the four areas of chemistry considered fundamental for undergraduates: organic, inorganic, physical and analytical. The results of these examinations will be used to plan a student's further studies. If a student's score in any of these areas is below the acceptable minimum, the student must either take the appropriate undergraduate course and receive at least a B. These examinations will be administered at the beginning of the first semester a student is registered, usually 2-3 days before the beginning of classes.

Computer Science and Engineering

M.S. in Computer Science and M.S. in Computer Science with Information Technology option: Both require either passing competency tests or taking courses with a grade of B or above in the course competence areas for the degree. Further details on the specific course competence requirements can found in the program's [catalog](#).

Ph.D. in Computer Science: The candidacy examination consists of two parts: the breadth exam and the depth exam. The breadth exam is a test of proficiency in undergraduate level material and

depth exam is a test of the student's readiness for dissertation-level research. Failure to pass either or both of these exams within the first four semesters as a Ph.D. student may result in termination of any and all funding. Further details on these exams can found on the program's [website](#).

Earth and Environmental Science

Earth and Environmental Science Qualifying Examination: this examination is required for advancement to candidacy in the Earth and Environmental Science Department's doctoral programs. This rigorous, specialized examination involves writing and orally defending a dissertation proposal, plus written examinations (one from each committee member, each up to 8 hours long, open or closed book) covering material relevant to the dissertation. The qualifying (aka, candidacy) exam is normally taken in the fourth or fifth semester, and can be repeated once if failed.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering

Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering Preliminary Examination: The purpose of the preliminary examination is to test the student's knowledge of undergraduate fundamentals in Petroleum Engineering. The Ph.D. student must take this examination by the end of the first year of the student's residency in the Ph.D. program. Further details can be found on the program's web [page](#).

Physics

The Physics Department requires all of its graduate students to take and pass a preliminary examination, offered twice yearly. The time line and level at which the examination must be passed depends upon the student's incoming degree level in Physics and whether he/she is pursuing a M.S. or Ph.D. The exam questions cover material from physics and mathematics normally included in an undergraduate physics curriculum. Any student failing to pass the preliminary examination within the specified time line will usually be dis-enrolled from the graduate program in Physics. See the "Physics Prelim Procedures" on the department website for further details.

FINANCIAL AID

Most graduate students are eligible for financial aid in one form or another. Besides the grants and loans that fund a great deal of undergraduate work, there are fellowships and several forms of assistantships. Also, if you are a foreign student, your government might pay for your schooling in full. Please visit the Financial Aid page on the Center for Graduate Studies website.

Assistantships

Appointments during the academic year may be awarded on either a 1/2-time or 1/4-time basis. Stipends are adjusted annually and [current values](#) for 1/2-time assistantships can be viewed on the web. Values for 1/4-time appointments are proportional. There are two types of assistantships: research and teaching. Both follow the same general rules.

Eligibility: Regular, full time graduate students and dual-registered students are eligible for assistantships. Part-time students, provisional students and graduate students admitted on probation are not eligible for assistantships. To keep your assistantship, you must be registered for and satisfactorily complete twelve credit hours during each semester (six credits in the summer) that you

are on support and you must formalize your [M.S.](#) or [Ph.D.](#) advisory committee with the Graduate Office by the end of your second semester. Note: normally only courses above 300-level count towards graduate registration and courses such as physical recreation never count toward full-time or contract (twelve credit) registration.

Causes for Revocation: You may lose your appointment if you are placed on warning, if you take a leave of absence, or if you do not adequately perform your required duties. On your return from a leave of absence, you must reapply for the assistantship. You may also lose your appointment by exceeding the financial time limits for completion of the requirements for your degree (1.5 times the credits required for your degree). If you have been making good progress and have the support of your adviser and department head, the Graduate Dean may authorize an extension of support. Utilize the petition for "[Extension of Time Limit to Complete Degree](#)"

An additional way that U.S. citizens could lose a teaching assistantship is if they do not file a Financial Assistance Form. The teaching assistantship section gives more information on the Financial Assistance Form.

Additional Information: To lessen the amount of money required for tuition and fees at the beginning of each semester, graduate assistants may elect to take advantage of the Graduate Deferred Payment Plan. This plan allows eligible students to distribute payment of tuition and some fees over the course of the semester.

After a contract has been prepared, the Graduate Office will send you a memo asking you to come to the office to sign the contract. If you wish, a copy of the contract will be made available to you so that you can study it before signing. In order to receive your pay, your contract must be signed and submitted to the Graduate Office. The Payroll Office can provide you with information about how much pay you will receive each pay period and how many pay periods are covered in your contract.

Work Limits

During your assistantship, you may not have more than one job on campus without the prior consent of your academic advisor, your department head, and the Graduate Dean. This is both for your protection and so that more graduate students will be supported. Your work responsibilities (for a half-time appointment) may not exceed 20 hours per week during the time when classes are in session.

To qualify for appointments between sessions, you must pre-register for classes for subsequent semester. Domestic graduate students may hold full time appointments in the summer. Because of the requirements imposed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, international students who have research appointments, may work full time only **between** academic sessions. For international students under contract in the summer, the research stipend may be no more than 60% greater than that for similar pay periods during the regular academic year (to cover international students working the extra hours between academic sessions).

Work Authorization

Full-time graduate students may obtain hourly employment from various campus entities. Such employment is accommodated under a Work Authorization (WA). During the Fall and Spring semesters, students holding a WA must satisfactorily complete at least 9 credits of approved (upper

division or graduate) coursework. In the summer, students holding a WA must satisfactorily complete at least 9 credits of approved (upper division or graduate) coursework. The only exception is made *one time*, in a student's final semester, with a reduced registration approval from the graduate office, when 6 credits of approved (upper division or graduate) coursework must be completed. When classes are in session, students on WA may work no more than 20 hours per week on all on-campus employment. As one example, if you have a 1/4-time RA **and** a WA, you may work for only 10 hours on the WA, since you are obligated for 10 hours to your RA. Working more than this maximum may be cause for dismissal from your job.

During the summer, students may have on-campus jobs unrelated to their degrees and avoid the necessity of registration if the benefits of employment are financial and not directly related to their degree progress or research project. A student who is: 1) not in residence for the summer, but is 2) preregistered as a full time student for the Fall semester, may qualify for a Work Authorization (on-campus employment up to 40 hours per week). The student's academic advisor must indicate that, to the best of their knowledge, the on-campus employment is unrelated to degree progress and that the student will not be using the facilities or staff of the Institute during the summer semester.

Taxes

All students receiving assistantships or otherwise employed on-campus, even students from other countries, are required to pay taxes on their employment. Taxes are automatically deducted from your pay. Domestic students may qualify for the Lifetime Learning Credit, an educational incentive program of the Internal Revenue Service that returns some monies spent on education.

Tuition

Those on a one quarter or one half time contract issued by New Mexico Tech will be charged tuition at in-state rates provided that their contract starts before the census date and continues throughout the entire semester. This means students that sign contracts written for less than 10 hours per week or that start after close of registration or end before the end of final exams will be charged tuition based on their legal residence (their home state/country).

Research Assistantships

Research assistantships may be granted for as little as one semester, however, it is more typical for these contracts to be written on either a nine-month (academic year) or a twelve-month (calendar year) basis. If you have a research assistantship, you will be working with a faculty member on a research project. It may be possible to use some portion of the research you do for your assistantship as part of your thesis or dissertation. If you have a twelve-month assistantship, you are allowed two weeks of vacation a year, if your supervisor approves. Your vacation schedule must be coordinated with your supervisor.

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching assistants work under the supervision of a faculty member. The work assigned to a teaching assistant may include teaching a lab or course, tutoring, preparing a lab, assisting in a lab, or grading. Once assigned to a course, you are responsible for all matters relating to the course, including grading, preparation of lectures and examinations. The stipend is paid from the department's budget and from work-study funds. If you receive a teaching assistantship and are a United States citizen, you must file a Financial Assistance Form (FAF) every year to determine your eligibility for work-study. Financial Aid Forms are available from the Financial Aid Office.

Fellowships

There are fellowships available for many graduate programs. A fellowship differs from an assistantship in that the funds are usually not derived from New Mexico Tech. Some fellowships are handled in the same way as assistantships, and some are not; you will have to determine the procedures for your particular appointment from the Graduate Office and from the department granting the fellowship. To find out about what fellowships are available, check your department bulletin boards, ask your department head, and talk to someone at the Graduate Office.

Minority Scholarships

Several fellowships are dedicated to minority students or students from a group that is underrepresented in a particular field. The requirements vary for each scholarship. If you are having trouble finding information on minority fellowships or scholarships, ask for help at the Graduate Office.

Loans

Another source of financial aid is through loans. You may apply directly to a bank as an individual for a loan, however, interest rates may be higher than alternatives. As a graduate student, you can apply for Guaranteed Student (Stafford or GSL) Loans. The GSL program lets you borrow from eligible lenders at lower rates. Eligibility for these loans is based on need and the loan is to meet your educational expenses only. You must be registered for at least half the normal course load (6 credits) to be eligible. Under the GSL program, you may borrow up to \$8,500 each year. The cumulative maximum for graduate GSLs is \$42,000, which means that if you did not start borrowing until you started graduate school, you could borrow up to \$8,500 per year for five years. You must start repaying GSLs six months after you stop going to school. You can find applications and have questions answered at the Financial Aid Office in Wells Hall.

Work-Study

Federal Work-Study (for permanent residents and U.S. citizens) and New Mexico Work-Study (for New Mexico residents) allotments are similar. Both are need-based, meaning you qualify based on your resources and expenses. Both programs work by granting "matching funds" to the school to make you more attractive to a department or other campus entity who is considering you for employment. Once you are employed, work-study funds are used to subsidize your earnings. If you do not find a job, you do not receive any money from the allotment. The amount of your allotment limits the number of hours you may work per week. Work-study allotments cannot be increased after the allotment is made.

DESIGNATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Sometimes it is not clear who is responsible for what. This section is intended to gather all of the miscellaneous responsibilities together, so that you have a quick reference when you are unsure. However, be aware that not all responsibilities are included here, nor can you assume that just because something is listed as a responsibility of someone else, you need not follow up on it. The ultimate responsibility for making sure you graduate lies with you.

The responsibilities are outlined in roughly chronological order within each section.

Student

Your very first responsibility is to select an advisor and advisory committee. This must be accomplished no later than the end of your second semester. The head of your department or a departmental graduate advisor may serve as your advisor initially, but you must select an advisor whose research interests closely match your own. If this happens to be the head of your department, you still must notify the Graduate Office.

After choosing your advisor and committee, you must fill out the appropriate advisory committee form and turn it in to the Graduate Office. Not turning in this form before the end of your second semester will result a hold being placed on your account so that you cannot register. You are always responsible for making certain that forms are returned to the Graduate Office.

Now that you have officially designated an advisory committee, you are responsible for calling meetings of the committee. This should be done at least once a year. Your first meeting should be used to establish your course program. The Report of the (M.S. or Ph.D.) Advisory Committee must be updated at each meeting. You must bring this form to each meeting. The same form is used each time. You can pick the form up at the Graduate Office before the meeting. Be sure to return the Advisory Committee Report Form to the Graduate Office after the meeting.

Although you have an advisory committee, YOU are responsible for making sure that you meet all of the requirements for graduation. Your committee and academic advisor should review your progress towards your degree and inform you if they notice missing requirements; however, committee members are not at fault if they fail to notice a missing requirement. If you have any concerns, go to your academic advisor--he or she is responsible for helping you satisfy requirements. In addition to calling a meeting of your advisory committee at least once a year, you should submit a progress report to your academic advisor at the end of each semester. There is no standard form available from the Graduate Office for this, but check with your advisor--some departments do have forms for this. At a minimum, your progress report should include courses you have taken; how you performed in each; and how you are progressing on your independent study, thesis, or dissertation. This is an appropriate forum to voice concerns you have about your course and research directions.

When it is finally time to begin work on your thesis or dissertation, you must have chosen the topic. The research topic should be within the advisor's area of expertise.

The student is responsible for seeing that all forms related to his or her progress are completed, correct and submitted to the Graduate Office in a timely manner.

Should you want (or need) to change your status as a student, you are responsible for initiating the process. For example, should you be suspended as a regular graduate student, you must take the initiative to apply for admission as a Special Graduate Student, if you wish to attempt readmission to your graduate program. Petitions for change of status should be submitted to the Graduate Office as a memo. The request must be endorsed by your academic advisor and by the department.

Academic Advisor

Your academic advisor is responsible for assisting you in the identification and completion of your degree requirements, for indicating approval of your registration and the successful completion of degree requirements, and (except where there is a separate research advisor) for directing your

research. Your relationship with your advisor(s) should be one of mutual professional respect and courtesy.

Research Advisor

In most instances, your academic and research advisor will be the same person. Should your graduate research project be funded or directed by someone who is not a regular faculty member, that person may act as your research advisor. The research advisor has routine control over the research project that you are undertaking. This advisor has primary responsibility in guiding you during the preparation of your report (thesis, independent study or dissertation). The research advisor indicates approval of your thesis or dissertation on the approval page, which accompanies that document. It is crucial that there be close communication between the academic advisor and the research advisor.

Advisory Committee

Your advisory committee is responsible for: assessing and approving courses appropriate to your program of study; approving your thesis or dissertation topic; participating in the defense of your thesis if that is your option; and accepting your independent study paper, thesis or dissertation before completion. You may argue on behalf of your interests regarding required classes, but before you graduate, the advisory committee must be convinced that you have a firm understanding of your field. If you are engaged in doctoral studies, your advisory committee is also responsible for the candidacy exam. The advisory committee is not responsible for your progress.

Department Head

The head of your department is an *ex officio* member of your advisory committee, and as such must approve of all decisions made by the advisory committee even if he or she does not attend meetings. Specifically, your department head must agree that you have completed all the department requirements, and sign a form agreeing to this before you graduate.

Graduate Dean

Responsibility for monitoring the progress of all graduate students falls to the Graduate Dean. He or she reviews the grades and performance of all graduate students at the end of each semester. The Graduate Dean is also responsible for advising special graduate students, or assigning another person to act as the advisor for a particular special graduate student.

The Dean is responsible for reviewing and passing on all petitions addressed to him or her, and for investigating and intervening, where appropriate, in serious problems which may arise between graduate students and advisors.

The Graduate Dean also has final responsibility for all theses and dissertations. After your advisory committee and department head have accepted your work, the Graduate Dean must also accept the thesis or dissertation in order for you to graduate.

Graduate Office

The Graduate Office is responsible for keeping records on each graduate student. The office keeps copies of your progress reports and the forms you file. They are not responsible for making sure the information on these forms is correct.

The Graduate Office is also responsible for checking on the registration of those graduate students who have assistantships. They do this within one week of the closing of registration. Usually, the Graduate Office will notify any student who is in danger of losing an assistantship.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with a decision made at any level, you may appeal to the next higher level. The appeal process proceeds from the academic advisor, to the committee, department, Graduate Dean and then to the Graduate Council. Thereafter appeals may be directed to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. You must exhaust your appeal options at each lower level before you carry it to the next level.

ETHICS AND PLAGIARISM

Why a Code of Ethics is Important

Ethics are a code which guides conduct. A breach of ethics causes harm to someone. Ethics are involved when people cheat on tests, fail to attribute information used in term papers and theses or falsify research results--such cheating adversely affects others. Sometimes it is difficult to see how unethical behavior might hurt others, but being caught in unethical behavior will always hurt you.

The administration, faculty, and your fellow students at New Mexico Tech expect you to act ethically. This includes not cheating, falsifying information, or plagiarizing, actions which may cause your instructor or department to reduce your course grade or to issue you a failing grade for the class, or to send you before the Disciplinary Board for more severe treatment. Other non-ethical acts may also be cause for disciplinary action: see the *New Mexico Tech Student Handbook* (available at the Student Services Office) for more information and a more complete description.

You may not be familiar with the word "plagiarism." Plagiarism (from the Latin word for "kidnapper") is the presentation of someone else's ideas or words as your own. You plagiarize deliberately if you copy a sentence from a book and pass it off as your writing, or if you summarize or paraphrase the ideas of someone else without acknowledging your debt. You plagiarize accidentally if you carelessly forget quotation marks around the words of another writer or mistakenly omit a citation for the ideas of another because you are unaware of the need to acknowledge the idea. Whether deliberate or accidental, plagiarism is a serious and often legally punishable offense. You do not plagiarize, however, when you draw on material from someone else and acknowledge sources. That procedure is a crucial part of responsible research.

There are several online sources that deal with plagiarism. A general discussion of plagiarism in the context of our laws and society is available at: <http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm>. The NMT Skeen Library has developed a web page devoted to [Avoiding Plagiarism](#) that contains many links to other sources. Here is a checklist for avoiding plagiarism, from *The Little Brown Handbook*, 4th ed., 1988, pages 572-573.

1. What type of source are you using: your own independent material, common knowledge, or someone else's independent material? You must acknowledge someone else's material.
2. If you are quoting someone else's material, is the quotation exact? Have you inserted quotation marks around quotations run into text? Have you shown omissions with ellipses and additions with brackets?

3. If you are paraphrasing or summarizing someone else's material, have you used your own words and sentence structure? Does your paraphrase or summary employ quotation marks when you resort to the author's exact language? Have you represented the author's meaning without distortion?
4. Is each use of someone else's material acknowledged in your text? Are all your source citations complete and accurate?
5. Does your list of works cited include all the sources you have drawn from in writing your paper?

WHEN IN DOUBT, CITE YOUR REFERENCES

Responsible Conduct for Graduate Student Policy

Found in the current NMT Academic Catalog. This policy addresses both Academic Honesty and Academic Research Integrity. Further, this section of the Graduate Catalog includes the Guide to Conduct and Citizenship for Graduate Students. As an NMT graduate student, you are responsible for knowing and following the policy.

Research Integrity Policy

Found on the NMT Research and Economic Development [webpage](#). This policy establishes the process for dealing with misconduct in research and creative activities associated with external funding. This policy applies to every researcher who is funded on any grant or contract; if you are funded externally, you are responsible for knowing and following the policy.