

Instructions for Graduate Program of Study (thesis and PhD students)

The Program of Study (POS) is due at mid-term of the first semester for accelerated master's students, and at midterm of the second semester of study for all other students. A POS includes this cover page and a DegreeWorks audit, plus any necessary supporting forms. The course plan can change but the final degree audit at time of graduation must be approved by the advisor and department head. Consult with your advisor before departing from your plan.

The **Graduate Education Policy GEP VI.4. Credit Policies for All Graduate Degrees** describes limitations on credits applied to graduate degrees. They are found in the [online academic catalog](#). Please review the policies prior to planning your Program of Study.

I. Confirm your degree type:

This step enables the Graduate Office to configure DegreeWorks (DW) to evaluate your audit correctly.

- **MS thesis students:** The major professor is formally assigned when the program of study is submitted and signed. If your major professor does not have access to your audit, please ask him/her to email the Grad Office.
- **PhD students without a master's degree:** skip to step II. DW uses this option by default for PhD students.
- **PhD students with a master's degree from another institution:** work with your major professor to complete the [Reduction of Credits for PhD](#) form. Submit it to the Grad Office immediately so that your DW audit can be adjusted to require the right number of credits.
- **PhD students with a master's degree from SD Mines:** All Mines grad credits will appear on the audit. Skip to part II unless you earned an accelerated MS from SD Mines. If you earned an accelerated MS from SD Mines, be sure to fill out the accelerated MS section of the Adjust Program Requirements page of this form.

II. Create your Program of Study audit and complete additional forms:

In this step, you will create a course plan and make sure it meets degree requirements.

1. Check with your department or program coordinator to see if they have a future semester schedule.
2. Review your program's requirements in DegreeWorks and in the online [academic catalog](#) to develop a draft plan of courses to take each semester.
3. Once you have a course plan that meets the approval of your advisor, use the Degree Works "What If" or "Planner" audit worksheet to enter future credits and test that program requirements will be met. See the [WhatIf Instructions](#) or [Planner Instructions](#) if needed.
4. If transferring courses from another institution, fill out a [Transfer Courses from Outside Institution](#) form to be submitted with this POS.

III. Complete the POS Form:

Complete the POS Cover Page using the PDF electronic form below. **Handwritten forms will not be accepted.**

5. Work with your major professor to select your committee members. Contact the committee members and ask them to review your course plan and agree to be on the committee. **AFTER** they have agreed to serve, type their names **and affiliations** on the POS Cover Page (signatures will be obtained in a later step). Include the organization name and an email for committee members not from South Dakota Mines.

A graduate committee is composed of a major professor, a graduate division representative from outside your department/program, and a minimum of one (for MS) or three (for PhD) additional committee members. Major professors and the graduate division representatives must be full-time faculty at SD Mines. Committee members may be from other universities or organizations, but additional committee members may then be required. If the desired major professor is not a full-time SD Mines faculty member, a co-major professor who is a full-time faculty member is required. See the Graduate Education Policy Section VI in the academic catalog for more detailed requirements regarding committees.

6. Review the POS Cover Page and ensure that all information is complete and correct.
7. If you are an Accelerated MS student, or need to request course exceptions or undergraduate course transfers, please complete the **Adjust Program Requirements** form that follows the cover page.
8. Sign the cover page electronically using Adobe Reader, taking care not to invalidate the signature box for your advisor/major professor.
9. Send an email to your major professor that includes these attachments: the POS Form, the DegreeWorks WhatIf or Planner audit, and the *Transfer Courses from Outside Institution Form* if applicable.
10. Your major professor will sign the Cover Page and forward everything to the Grad Office, gradoffice@sdsmt.edu.
11. The Grad Office will review the documents for accuracy. If all is in order, we will prepare a DocuSign electronic form to gather the committee and department head signatures on the POS Cover Page and Adjust Requirements page.
12. Once all department signatures are obtained, the Dean of Graduate Education will sign the documents. The student and the advisor/major professor will receive emailed copies of the approved forms. You should retain these for reference and documentation.

IV. Stay on track to graduate

13. Before you register each semester, review your plan and your DegreeWorks audit to ensure that you are staying on track to graduate when you intend to.
14. If you need to deviate from your planned courses, be sure to consult with your advisor first. You do NOT need to submit another POS. You may need to submit an [Adjust Program Requirements form](#) for any courses that appear in the Other Courses and Not Applicable sections at the bottom of the audit.
15. You can use the WhatIf or Planner audit at any time to check whether your revised plans will still meet requirements.
16. After registering for your final semester, review your audit to ensure that you meet requirements. If not, visit with your advisor and make sure you submit an *Adjust Program Requirements* form if needed.
17. Your advisor and department will review and must approve your final audit in order for you to graduate.
18. Note that the defense requirement for research students will not be marked complete until after you submit the final Checkout form. It is acceptable for this requirement to appear incomplete at the time of the department audit.

