For Current Students

These timelines will lay out the steps and procedures that you, as a student in the MPA Program at UND, will encounter. Each year is broken down into semesters and you can check off tasks as you complete them.

In each list, tasks will be listed in black, which indicates a required deadline, and green, which indicates a recommendation. Students are allowed to set their own learning pace, but the green steps indicate when it is recommended that students consider a task or process. The timelines and recommendations correspond with a time frame of two years for completion of the program for a full-time (9 credits/semester) student.

Each task or step is linked to a detailed description of how to complete that step and any forms or links that are needed or could be helpful when completing that step. To access these detailed descriptions, simply click on the task.

You may also select the COURSES link under each semester in order to view a list of the courses that are normally offered in that semester.

For information on procedures and preparation before the start of your first semester, including applying for the program refer to: Prospective Student Timeline

Please select the semester in which you are starting the MPA Program:

- FALL
- SPRING
- SUMMER
Apply for the program:
  o Application Deadlines:
    ▪ Fall Admission: August 1st
    ▪ Spring Admission: December 1st
    ▪ Summer Admission: May 1st
  o To Apply:
    ▪ Visit: http://graduateschool.und.edu/my-gradspace.cfm
    ▪ Click: My Gradspace login.
    ▪ Click: Account Activation/Password Retrieval
    ▪ Enter your e-mail address and click submit
    ▪ Follow the steps provided in the e-mail sent from My Gradspace

For a detailed description of the application process view the MPA Admissions Policy

Once you have been accepted into the program:
☐ Apply for Financial Aid:
  o Fill out the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov
    ▪ If you have any questions throughout the financial aid process contact the Student Financial Aid Office at (701) 777-3121, email at sfa@email.und.edu, or live chat, which is accessible from the student financial aid website: http://und.edu/admissions/financial-aid/

☐ Claim your IDM Account
  ▪ Visit: http://itss.und.edu
  ▪ Click “Claim Your Account” and follow the appropriate steps
  ▪ This account will be used for Blackboard, Campus Connection, and your U-mail account.
  ▪ For technical support with this process, call: 701-777-6305 or 1-800-342-8230 (request Tech Support)

Click below to return to the first page of this document to select the semester in which you are starting the program for the MPA program timeline
FALL SEMESTER START

Click on any task to view a detailed description and access any necessary forms or other documents that correspond with that task.

If you need to return to this page after viewing a task description, look for the semester links in the bottom right-hand side of every page.

FIRST YEAR
First Semester – Fall
COURSES
☐ Graduate School Orientation
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
  ☐ Designate a Proctor
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance

Second Semester – Spring
COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Complete Program of Study
☐ Apply for Financial Aid for the next year
☐ Begin to consider Independent Study topics

SUMMER
☐ Internship
☐ Summer Classes

SECOND YEAR
First Semester - Fall
COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Choose an Independent Study topic
☐ Select Independent Study Advisor
☐ Complete Three-Signature Proposal and Presentation
☐ If necessary, seek IRB Approval for Independent Study Research
☐ Submit Topic Proposal Form to Graduate School

Second Semester – Spring
COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Apply for Graduation
☐ Attend Class
☐ Submit Preliminary Drafts of Independent Study to Advisor

☐ Sign up for Comprehensive Exams & Begin Studying
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Take Comprehensive Exams
☐ Final Draft of Independent Study
☐ Final Report on Candidate to Graduate School
☐ Presentation of Independent Study

GRADUATION – May
SPRING SEMESTER START

- Click on any task to view a detailed description and access any necessary forms or other documents that correspond with that task.
- If you need to return to this page after viewing a task description, look for the semester links in the bottom right-hand side of every page.

FIRST YEAR
 First Semester – Spring
 COURSES

☐ Graduate School Orientation
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
   ☐ Designate a Proctor
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance

SUMMER
☐ Summer Classes

Second Semester – Fall
 COURSES

☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Complete Program of Study
☐ Begin to consider Independent Study topics

SECOND YEAR
 Third Semester – Spring
 COURSES

☐ Internship
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Apply for Financial Aid for the next year
☐ Choose an Independent Study topic
☐ Select Independent Study Advisor
☐ Complete Three-Signature Proposal and Presentation
☐ If necessary, seek IRB Approval for Independent Study Research
☐ Submit Topic Proposal Form to Graduate School

SUMMER
☐ Summer Classes

Fourth Semester – Fall
COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Apply for Graduation
☐ Attend Class
☐ Submit Preliminary Drafts of Independent Study to Advisor
☐ Sign up for Comprehensive Exams & Begin Studying
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Take Comprehensive Exams
☐ Final Draft of Independent Study
☐ Final Report on Candidate to Graduate School
☐ Presentation of Independent Study

GRADUATION – December
SUMMER SEMESTER START

- Click on any task to view a detailed description and access any necessary forms or other documents that correspond with that task.
- If you need to return to this page after viewing a task description, look for the semester links in the bottom right-hand side of every page.

FIRST YEAR
First Semester – Summer
COURSES
☐ Graduate School Orientation
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
  ☐ Designate a Proctor
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance

Second Semester – Fall
COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Complete Program of Study

Third Semester – Spring
COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Apply for Financial Aid for next year
☐ Begin to consider Independent Study topics

SECOND YEAR
SUMMER
☐ Internship
☐ Summer Classes

Fourth Semester – Fall
COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Attend Class
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Choose an Independent Study topic
☐ Select Independent Study Advisor
☐ Complete Three-Signature Proposal and Presentation
☐ If necessary, seek IRB Approval for Independent Study Research
☐ Submit Topic Proposal Form to Graduate School

Fifth Semester – Spring

COURSES
☐ Register for Classes
☐ Order your textbooks
☐ Apply for Graduation
☐ Attend Class
☐ Submit Preliminary Drafts of Independent Study to Advisor
☐ Sign up for Comprehensive Exams & Begin Studying
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance
☐ Take Comprehensive Exams
☐ Final Draft of Independent Study
☐ Final Report on Candidate to Graduate School
☐ Presentation of Independent Study

GRADUATION - May
Fall Courses:

Odd Year Fall
POLS 500 Research Methods- 3 credits
POLS 539 Administrative Law- 3 credits
POLS 551 Health Organization & Administration- 3 credits
POLS 561 Creation and Management of Social Enterprises- 3 credits

Even Year Fall
POLS 531 Seminar: Public Administration- 3 credits
POLS 508 Legislative and Executive Processes- 3 credits
POLS 552 Health Policy- 3 credits
ENTR 580 Seminar in Social Entrepreneurship- 3 credits or SOC 568 Sociology of Social Entrepreneurship- 3 credits

Offered Every Semester
POLS 580 Administrative Internship- 3 credits
POLS 591 Readings- 1-3 credits
POLS 996 Continuing Enrollment- 1-12 credits
POLS 997 Independent Study- 2 credits
POLS 998 Thesis- 1-4 credits

Spring Courses:

Odd Year Spring
POLS 538 Public Budgeting and Financial Analysis- 3 credits
POLS 536 Public Personnel Administration- 3 credits
POLS 593 Problems: Legal & Ethical Issues in Health Care- 3 credits
POLS 503 Government and Business- 3 credits Note: POLS 503 is not offered online.
ENTR 580: Seminar in Social Entrepreneurship- 3 credits or SOC 568 Sociology of Social Entrepreneurship- 3 credits

Even Year Spring
ECON 575 Health Economics- 3 credits
POLS 501 Political & Public Policy Analysis- 3 credits
POLS 532 Public Policy- 3 credits
POLS 503 Government and Business- 3 credits Note: PolS 503 is not offered online.
POLS 562 Political Advocacy and Social Entrepreneurship- 3 credits

Offered Every Semester
POLS 580 Administrative Internship- 3 credits
POLS 591 Readings- 1-3 credits
POLS 996 Continuing Enrollment- 1-12 credits
POLS 997 Independent Study- 2 credits
POLS 998 Thesis- 1-4 credits
Graduate School Orientation

The Graduate School offers both an on-campus orientation and an online orientation for distance and online students. Online orientation materials can be found at: http://graduateschool.und.edu/learn-more/online-orientation.cfm.

For the date, time, and location of the campus orientation and to RSVP for the event visit My GradSpace.

You are not required to attend the on-campus event or to utilize the online orientation materials but are encouraged to do so if you are able.

Students are also encouraged to utilize the orientation materials provided through the MPA website: http://www.business.und.edu/academics/academic-programs/mpa/orientation.cfm

Summer Classes:

Each summer at least one course is offered in the program. Students should consider taking a summer course in order to lighten their course load for their last semester in the program. A regular 9 credit, 3 course schedule may be too much when paired with the other important processes that need to be completed in the final semester. By planning ahead and utilizing time in the summer for a course, students can avoid being overburdened when completing their independent study during their last semester in the program.

The following courses are offered in the summer sessions:

- **Odd numbered Summer:**
  - POLS 533 Administrative Ethics in the Public Sector- 3 credits
- **Even numbered Summer:**
  - POLS 502 Seminar: Problems in State & Local Government- 3 credits
- Other courses may be offered depending on the semester. Contact the department as the summer approaches to inquire about any other courses that may be offered.
Register for Classes

To register for classes, students must acquire a permission number from The Department of Political Science and Public Administration. To receive this number, contact the department at 1-701-777-3831. This number will be used in the final steps of enrolling.

Registering for Classes Process:

1. Log in to Campus Connection
2. Select Student Center
3. Select Enroll
4. Select the semester (i.e. Spring 2009)
5. Insert the class number (ex. 23133) and press enter or press search to browse the classes being offered.
   - When using the search function remember that most MPA courses are offered under the course subject of Political Science. Also be sure to select “Graduate” under the Course Career option.
   - Remember that on-campus students should register for section 1 of the courses while online students should register for section 2.
6. Once a course is selected enter your permission number in the permission number box. Click next. This is will add the course to your “shopping cart”.
7. Continue this process for all courses you would like to enroll in for that semester.
8. When you are finished adding courses make sure you are under the “Enroll” tab. Check the list of courses to be sure all of your desired selections are included.
9. Finish enrolling by following the appropriate steps within your shopping cart: Select “Proceed to Step 2 of 3” and finally select “Finish Enrolling”

For students who are not able to take classes during a semester:

If you have decided to not take any courses during a semester, you must complete a leave of absence form with the Graduate School:

Leave of Absence Form

When students decide to continue taking courses in a subsequent semester they must then complete a re-Admittance form with the Graduate School:

Re-admittance Form

Order your textbooks:

- If students obtain the ISBN for their required textbooks from either the professor for the course or the bookstore, course books can easily be purchased through online sources such as Amazon.
• If you are interested in purchasing an earlier edition of a course book than the one that is listed as required, contact your professor to be sure that the earlier edition is not missing important updates.

• If you are unsure about purchasing any recommended materials for a course, contact the professor to determine whether these materials will be of use with your learning style.

• Students can also order their course books from the University’s bookstore:

Visit the UND Bookstore at: 755 Hamline St Grand Forks, ND

Or place your order online through the bookstore website:

- Move your mouse over the “Books” button
- Select “Textbooks & Course Materials”
- Select “Main Campus and Distance Learning” under the Select Your Program drop down
- Select the appropriate term under the Select Your Term drop down
- Select “POL$” under the Select Your Department drop down
- Select the appropriate course number (i.e. 503)
- Select Your Section drop down: On-campus students are section 01, Distance (Online) students are section 02
- Click “Submit”
- Chose to buy new or used and then add the items to your cart
- Select other courses by repeating these steps and go to you cart when you have selected all the necessary course books
- Select a course condition preference listed under the books in your cart and select “Checkout”
- Follow the appropriate prompts for checking out.

Here is a list of payment methods University of North Dakota Bookstore accepts both online & in-store: Financial Aid, American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa, Gift Card, U Cash

Financial Aid: When selecting Financial Aid as your payment option, please enter the last 6 digits of your Student ID #

U Cash: When selecting U Cash as your payment option, please enter 00 followed by your 7 digit student ID (No alpha characters) followed by your 2 DIGIT card #.

Textbooks are available for purchase as soon as the bookstore gets the information from the faculty. If you don't see your book listed, you can either check back or contact your instructor.
□ Attend class:

All students (whether receiving instruction on-site or online) are **required** to attend the “live” classes offered in the evenings.

For exact dates on when classes begin, refer to the Academic Calendar: [http://www.und.edu/dept/registrar/Calendar.htm](http://www.und.edu/dept/registrar/Calendar.htm)

- **On Campus Students:**
  - Find your course meeting day and room on [Campus Connection](http://www.und.edu/dept/registrar/Calendar.htm).
  - Select **Student Center**
  - Your courses will be listed under This Week’s Schedule
  - For additional information select weekly schedule (be sure to select a week during the semester in the “Show Week of” box in order to view your course times and locations)

- **Online Students:**

  **Adobe Connect** is the program used to broadcast the class meetings to distance students.
  - Login Information: All users (instructors AND students) will log in to class with their IdM username and password, not as a Guest. This is the same UserID/password used to access Umail. If you have forgotten your password or have not claimed your account, please go to [http://itss.und.edu](http://itss.und.edu).
  - If you ever need help with Adobe Connect visit: [http://und.edu/cio/cilt/index.cfm](http://und.edu/cio/cilt/index.cfm) Or call: (701)-777-6305

  **Adobe Connect Checklist:**
  **1. In order to properly participate in class meetings:** you will need a webcam and USB headset. Click on the following link if you need help determining if you have the correct headset: [http://www.conted.und.edu/connectsupport/supported.html](http://www.conted.und.edu/connectsupport/supported.html)

  Once you have your headset you should make sure it is set as the default audio device. To begin, plug your headset into your computer. This video explains how to set the default audio device on your computer:

  - **Windows XP users:** [https://conted.breeze.und.nodak.edu/xpdefaultaudio/](https://conted.breeze.und.nodak.edu/xpdefaultaudio/)
  - **Windows Vista & 7 users:** [https://conted.breeze.und.nodak.edu/vista7defaultaudio](https://conted.breeze.und.nodak.edu/vista7defaultaudio)
  - **Mac users:** Video coming soon

  **Note:** Once you unplug your headset the default audio device should revert back to your speakers.
2. Check your internet connection
   - How are you connected to the internet? Most users are plugged in directly to their modem/router or are using a wireless connection.

   - **Wireless or satellite internet connections do not work with Adobe Connect.** The audio and video tends to skip or be delayed. Please note the issue does not always seem apparent on the end of the user who has a wireless or satellite connection, but the other participants may notice the delay or audio cutting out.

   - If you are plugged in directly but normally use a wireless connection, make sure you have disabled or turned off your wireless connection. Most computers try to use a wireless connection even if you have already plugged a line into your computer.

3. Test your computer
   - Please go to the following URL and test your computer for participation in an Adobe Connect Class. You should pass all 4 check marks.
     http://conted.breeze.und.nodak.edu/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm

4. Watch the video tutorial on using Adobe Connect
   - This short video explains how to log in to the Adobe Connect classroom, how to change your connection speed and how to complete the Audio Setup Wizard. It also walks you through some of the basic features you'll use in Adobe Connect.
     http://conted.breeze.und.nodak.edu/studentpreflight

5. Complete a preflight
   - Even after completing the above steps you should go through a preflight with a Live Help technician who can be sure that you are getting the best audio and video performance possible. The technician will also be able to answer any questions you have on using Adobe Connect.

     - Preflight information (including dates and times) can be found at http://und.edu/cio/cilt/support/students/adobe-connect-students.cfm. Several preflight sessions have been scheduled at the beginning of the semester. Please note that you may need to wait for 30 minutes or longer if all support persons are busy assisting other students. Preflight times are also offered throughout the semester, so if you switch computers or complete any updates to your computer you should run through a preflight again.

**DESIGNATE A PROCTOR**

When exams are given in a graduate class, online students are required to designate a proctor. Follow the steps provided at the following link in order to complete this process: http://distance.und.edu/currentStudent/degree/?page=1158.

Keep in mind that students are required to designate a proctor at least 7 business days prior to the first proctored exam.
☐ Pay your Campus Connection account balance:

- The last day to pay your balance without receiving a late fee is within the first month of school starting. To avoid the late fee always pay your balance as soon as possible.
- To make a payment:
  - Log in to Campus Connection
  - Select Self Service
  - Select Campus Finances
  - Select Pay Online Now
  - Click Make a Payment
  - If the current balance is as expected, choose Pay under Action
  - Choose a payment option & select Go
  - Enter in the amount you wish to pay (the Current Balance is the total amount owed – if you wish to pay off your entire balance you would enter the Current Balance amount)
  - Choose Continue & then Submit Payment

☐ Complete your Program of Study:

Internship Waiver:

Those MPA students with at least one year of professional experience in a public sector or other public affairs agency can apply to have the internship requirement for the program waived. Professional public service would preferably be at the administrative level, where duties may include (but not be limited to) working with budgets, completing supervisory tasks (human resources related duties, such as hiring and evaluation, conducting training, etc.), working with entities in the public sector, writing grant proposals, and working with diverse clienteles.

If you wish to have the internship requirement waived, you would complete the following steps when you complete your program of study.

1. Write a letter to the MPA Director requesting that their internship requirement be waived. In the letter, students must provide an explanation of why they believe they have met the requirement of having “at least one year of professional experience” in a relevant organization.
2. Provide a current resume documenting the work described in the aforementioned letter.

These documents should be submitted along with the program of study to the Graduate Director. If you are applying for this waiver, an internship should not be included on your program of study.
Upon receipt of the student’s letter and resume, the MPA Director will evaluate your request. If approved, a memo will be placed in the student’s MPA file stating that the internship requirement has been waived.

**Use this form to complete your Program of Study:**

**Program of Study Form**

Make sure to read through the following points and keep them in mind when completing this process.

1. The Graduate Director serves as the advisor for all students in the program until they select an advisor for their independent study. For the Program of Study Form, the MPA Director’s signature will be needed for both the Advisor and Graduate Director spaces.

2. It is advised that a program of study is submitted in your second semester in the program or as soon as you know the courses they will take. Keep in mind that you **cannot be advanced to candidacy without completing your Program of Study and having it approved by the Graduate School**.

3. Review the program requirements: [http://business.und.edu/mpa/programrequirements.cfm](http://business.und.edu/mpa/programrequirements.cfm)

   Meet with the Graduate Director to develop your proposed program.

   Keep the following points in mind when formulating your program:

   - Only those UND courses listed in the Graduate Catalog are eligible for use.

   - When planning when you will complete the program and when to take certain classes, keep in mind the Independent Study requirement and how this will fit in with your schedule. Consider the opportunity provided by the Research Methods course, POLS 500. This course requires working with data and the completion of a research proposal that could serve as the initial research for your Independent Study.

   - The Graduate School will make an evaluation of transfer credits when your program of study is submitted. Please check with the Graduate Director for eligibility of these courses to be applied to your degree. Transfer courses must be listed on your program exactly as they appear on your transcript with the exception that quarter credits be converted into semester credits. If you have not yet completed the transfer credits on your program, list next to the course which institution they will be taken from. Do not list more than the maximum number of acceptable transfer credits on your program. Up to 8 credits of eligible transfer work is acceptable with a grade of B or better. (See: “Transfer of Graduate Credits” in the Graduate Catalog.)

   - No more than nine non-degree credits may be applied to your degree.
Graduate courses more than seven years old are considered obsolete and may not be used on a program of study. However, UND courses may be revalidated by submitting a plan of study for approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. If you plan to revalidate any UND courses, please contact the Graduate School so we can send you the form for the Revalidation Plan. This revalidation plan must be submitted and approved before the revalidation process is undertaken.

If you plan to conduct research on human subjects, you must first receive approval from the Institutional Review Board. You are not allowed to conduct research until you receive this approval. Forms and information are available at the Research and Program Development office (Twamley Hall, Room 101; 777-4278). Keep in mind that you must complete the appropriate training to do human subjects research. Training is available through the IRB's webpage. Research involving animals, recombinant DNA, radiation, and bio-hazardous agents also require special approval. Please consult with your advisor regarding approval of such research. Your topic proposal of your research (independent study, thesis, etc.) will not be approved without the appropriate committee's approval.

4. Type your program on the appropriate form and use the following organization:

- Supply a title for each group of courses. Group courses into the appropriate major, minor, cognate, foundations, etc. in accord with the degree requirements stated in the Graduate Catalog. Leave some space between these areas to allow for any future minor revisions.

- Be sure you have included at least the minimum number of required credits in the total program, the major, the minor, the cognate, and the foundations areas.

- Please list the credit amounts in the appropriate column for each course listed.

5. Sign the program and submit your program to the Graduate Director for signatures. Your program will be submitted to the Graduate school. A copy will be sent to the Graduate Director and student when approved by the Graduate School.

6. For changes to an approved program of study, a separate form must be submitted.
Apply for Financial Aid:

- Fill out the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
  - If you have any questions throughout the financial aid process contact the Student Financial Aid Office at (701) 777-3121, email at sfa@email.und.edu, or live chat, which is accessible from the student financial aid website: [http://und.edu/admissions/financial-aid/](http://und.edu/admissions/financial-aid/)

Internship: for full details refer to the [Internship Manual](#)

Internship Waiver: For details on how to apply for an internship waiver, refer to the [Program of Study](#) directions.

Those MPA students with at least one year of professional experience in a public sector or other public affairs agency can apply to have the internship requirement for the program waived. Professional public service would preferably be at the administrative level, where duties may include (but not be limited to) working with budgets, completing supervisory tasks (human resources related duties, such as hiring and evaluation, conducting training, etc.), working with entities in the public sector, writing grant proposals, and working with diverse clienteles.

The following is an overview of internship requirements:

- Complete at least 300 hours of internship activity
- Submit mid-term and final evaluations signed by internship sponsor
- Maintain and submit (entire) notebook with time and work journal
- Submit a paper (included in notebook)

The student seeking an internship also must complete the following steps:

1. Schedule an appointment with the MPA Director, prior to semester registration that you wish to begin an internship.
2. The MPA Director will discuss the required assignments and evaluation schedule with the intern.
3. The MPA Director will provide advice on organizations that may provide internship opportunities.
4. Prepare your resume.
5. Schedule and meet with appropriate personnel from the prospective internship agency, then report back to the MPA Director.
6. After discussing your work schedule, duties, and expectations with the sponsor, complete the Internship Agreement and the Indemnity Forms. *NOTE: The student is responsible to see to the return of these (and all forms) to the MPA Director.*

7. Students and sponsoring agencies are strongly advised to keep duplicates of all forms.


9. Begin your internship and maintain your work journal. *Note in the Grade section the value attached to the completeness of this journal.*

10. Maintain contact with the MPA Director at least monthly.

11. At midterm and one week before the end of the internship, the reviews of the intern should be completed by the sponsoring agency. It is recommended that the review be discussed with the intern for positive and negative feedback benefits. *Remember that it is the responsibility of the student to make sure that these documents get to the MPA Director promptly.*

12. Paper and notebook due one week before the end of the semester.

13. **IMPORTANT! You must complete 300 hours.**

**Internship Grading:**
The MPA Director assumes final responsibility for assigning the grade for the internship. However, the agency sponsor's evaluations are considered in assigning the grade. The intern will receive a letter grade at the end of the internship.

Grading is based on the sponsor's evaluations, meeting internship requirement deadlines, the journal, the research paper, and any additional requirements as determined by the internship supervisor.

**Housekeeping Responsibilities 10%**
Resume 5%
Forms Completed 5%

**Calendar and Daily Journal 30%**
Calendar (General Responsibilities) 5%
Time and Duty Log 5%
Journal (Detailed Activities) 20%

**Research Paper (See Below) 50%**

**Sponsor Evaluations 10%**
Begin to Consider Independent Study Topics

For detailed information about the Independent Study, refer to the Independent Study Guidebook.

Completing a Thesis is also an option for students in the program. If you plan to continue your education into a Ph.D. program, meet with the Graduate Director to discuss the Thesis option as this may be a more suitable project.

It is important that you keep the Independent Study project in mind throughout your coursework in order to allow yourself enough time to develop an adequate topic. Many students discover Independent Study topics while researching for a regular course paper during a semester or during their internship. When completing course assignments consider how those paper topics could be expanded into an Independent Study. Keep an eye out for useful data opportunities that could address a research question. Also, look for important research questions and problems that can be studied empirically while in your internship.

Keep in mind the following questions when working to discover a topic:

Start your study by asking general questions:
- What is your main research question?
- What do you wish to pursue?
- Why do you wish to pursue this issue?
- Why is it important to study this topic?

Fine-tuning your research question:
- What do you wish to understand about the topic? Why? Where will the information come from?
- Can the topic be studied successfully?
- What should be done to better understand the problem?
- What has been done by others who have examined the topic of interest to you? Is there a vast literature, or is it limited?
- What are the contributing or mitigating factors?
- How do you propose tackling this problem?
- What are the minor questions that flow out of the major question you wish to explore? Are there sub-questions that flow from your primary question? Should you address those also?
- Is your focus too broad? Too narrow?
- What is the context and background?
- Who else, beside yourself, believes there is a problem related to your question that warrants investigating?
- Why does this—the subject or topic—matter? In other words, why should this study be conducted?

Planning your Methodology:
- Do not corner yourself into choosing a method before you choose a research question. You will be drawn to a methodology based on your question. All studies, even a
comprehensive literature review, such as a meta-analysis or a meta-synthesis, use a methodology. In these cases, the literature is your sample, and the review is your method. Although all studies will have some aspect of literature review, a paper that is a comprehensive review of the literature is held to much higher standards regarding the content of that review, is typically much longer overall, and provides theoretical insights that go beyond the existing literature.

- What are the potential methodologies available to address your research question? How will it be conducted?
- How do you plan to address your research question and why?
- Will you gather primary data? How will that data be collected: Survey, experiment, field research, qualitative interviewing, etc.?
- Will you need IRB approval for the use of human subjects?
- Will you use secondary data? Existing data?
- Will you evaluate an existing program, organization, etc.?
- How sound is your methodology—what is the design for your study? Longitudinal, crosssectional, pre-post, etc.?
- Is the best methodology a comprehensive review of the literature or a meta-analysis / metasynthesis?
- How is what you are planning to do linked to the questions you developed for the study and the conceptual framework or guiding principles for the topic and your study?
- What statistical methods will be most appropriate for analyzing the data gathered?

☐ Choose an Independent Study Topic

For detailed information about the Independent Study, refer to the Independent Study Guidebook.

Deciding on one topic can be difficult. You want to select a topic that is interesting to you, since you will be spending a lot of time on the research and writing. You also want to make sure that the topic is relevant and that there are realistic methods for studying your research question.

Keep in mind the opportunity provided by the Research Methods course, POLS 500. This course requires working with data and the completion of a research proposal that could serve as the initial research for your Independent Study.

Once you have some potential ideas, meet with the Graduate Director to discuss these ideas and to make sure that the project is feasible and that the time and energy you will put into preparing the topic is not wasted.

Once you have decided on a topic that you would like to address for your Independent Study, you can move on to the next steps for the Independent Study project.
Select an Independent Study Advisor

For detailed information about the Independent Study, refer to the Independent Study Guidebook.

As you select an Independent Study topic, meet with the Graduate Director to discuss faculty members that might best fit with your chosen topic area. The Graduate Director can help to facilitate the initial communication between you and your Independent Study Advisor.

One you have selected an advisor, use the following form to finalize the process: Advisor Appointment Form

IRB Approval

If your research uses human subjects, e.g. you are conducting a survey of UND students, you may need IRB approval. This can be a time consuming process, therefore you should speak with the IRB committee to determine the appropriate steps to take to receive their approval.

You are not allowed to conduct research until you receive this approval. Forms and information are available at the Research and Program Development office (Twamley Hall, Room 101; 777-4278).

Keep in mind that you must complete the appropriate training to do human subjects research. Training is available through the IRB’s webpage. Research involving animals, recombinant DNA, radiation, and bio-hazardous agents also require special approval.

Please consult with your advisor regarding approval of such research. Your topic proposal of your research (independent study, thesis, etc.) will not be approved without the appropriate committee's approval.

Three-Signature Proposal & Presentation

The presentation requirement involves a meeting with your Independent Study Advisor and two other individuals that will be assessing your Independent Study (selected by the department). The student will prepare the proposal under the guidance of their Advisor and then will schedule a meeting with the advisor and the other two chosen individuals (a.k.a. Assessment Committee). During this meeting, you will provide a brief description of the Independent Study project proposal that you created with your advisor. The proposal you present should be detailed enough to convey a clear picture of the research question(s) you seek to address, the importance to the field of study, a brief discussion of the relevant literature, the methods you intend to use, and a description of the proposed solutions.
This presentation and review by the Assessment Committee is done in order to assess whether the student’s goals are in line with Program expectations. Once the Assessment Committee approves your project proposal, the Three-Signature Proposal should be filled out. The Three-Signature Proposal must be completed prior to the student submitting their Topic Proposal form to the Graduate School.

For more information about the Three-Signature Proposal and for the Three-Signature Proposal form, refer to Independent Study Guidebook.

Submit Topic Proposal Form to Graduate School

Topic Proposal Form

Once your Three-Signature Proposal and Presentation is complete you must submit the Topic Proposal Form to the Graduate School. This step cannot occur until the Three-Signature Proposal and Presentation step is complete.

The proposal of a topic for an independent study or thesis must be approved before a student may become a candidate for a degree and therefore you cannot graduate without this step being completed on time. The proposal should be submitted and approved before substantial work on the topic is undertaken.

The proposal must be in narrative style and include 1) a title, 2) a brief description of the nature of the problem or study, 3) the procedure or methodology to be followed, and 4) the anticipated results. The information presented should be such as to aid the advisor or advisory committee in ascertaining whether the problem or study is appropriate for the diploma or degree sought.

Using the Topic Proposal Form, type the proposal, secure your advisor’s signature, and submit the original to The Graduate School. (Please try to keep the proposal to one page in length).

The Topic Proposal Form must be completed and turned in to the Graduate School no later than the day before classes begin in the semester you plan to graduate.
☐ Sign up for Comprehensive Exams & Begin Studying

Comprehensive Exams are offered three times a year, once per semester. If students are interested in taking the exams, they must take them on the date and time that the department schedules them to take place. The dates for Comprehensive Exams are released usually within a month of the start of the semester. Once the dates have been released you should contact the Graduate Director to sign up to take the exams. The Graduate Director will inform you of the location of the exams. They take place on two days, start at the same time both days and last 3 hours each day.

A total study time of 150 hours is recommended in order to ensure that students are prepared for the exams. This is equivalent to 12 hours of studying each week for 3 months. It is recommended that you begin preparing for the exams at the beginning of the semester in which you are taking them.

For more information about the exams refer to the Comprehensive Exam Information Sheet.

☐ Submit Preliminary Drafts of Independent Study

At the beginning of your last semester you should meet with your advisor for your Independent Study and discuss set a schedule for when drafts of your work should be submitted for review.

The independent study is an iterative product (you submit a draft, it is reviewed by your advisor, you make changes, etc.). All students need revisions and often it takes several. Before you begin, there is no way of knowing how many revisions you will require, so allow yourself and the faculty members you work with enough time.

A common mistake is to not allow enough time for revisions and to wait until deadlines approach. For each draft you should allow faculty 1-2 weeks to review it and get it back to you. You should also allow yourself plenty of time to make changes, since some may be significant. Time management is very important. Get out a calendar and, including the 1-2 weeks for each revision (two seems to be about average), figure out a timeline. Remember to include time cushions for any externalities (e.g., IRB approval, survey responses, etc.) that could slow down the process.

From your perspective, each draft, even the first, should be in a finalized format. That is, it is not your advisor’s or committee members’ responsibility to edit your document, so it should be grammatically sound, free of typos, etc.
☐ Take the Comprehensive Exams

Most of the information for the Comprehensive Exams is available in the Comprehensive Exam Information Sheet.

The following is a brief overview of the format of the exam:

EXAM FORMAT:

Day 1: 3 hours

A. Scope of Public Administration. Questions in this area are designed to ascertain the students’ knowledge of the development of the field of public administration, its major figures, issues, and trends. All students will have the same choice of questions in this area.

Most relevant course:
POLS 531 - Seminar: Public Administration

B. Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques of Analysis. Questions in this area focus on policy and program formulation, implementation, and evaluation, as well as decision-making and problem solving. Also included in this area is research design and statistical applications. All students will have the same choice of questions in this area.

Most relevant courses:
POLS 500 - Research Methods
POLS 501 - Political and Policy Analysis
MGMT 501 - Quantitative Analysis for Management Decisions

Day 2: 3 hours

C. Management of Public Service (or Health) Organizations. General Track students will be asked questions that examine a students’ understanding of human resources, budgeting, and financial processes, and information management. Students in the health administration concentration will answer questions directed at that field.

Most relevant courses – General Track Students
POLS 536 - Public Personnel Administration
POLS 538 - Public Budgeting and Financial Management
POLS 539 - Administrative Law
POLS 502 - Seminar: Problems in State and Local Government
ACCT 509 - Accounting Information for Decision and Control
ECON 324 - Public Finance

Most relevant course – Health Concentration Students
POLS 551 - Health Administration and Organization
D. Understanding of the Public (or Health) Policy and Organizational Environment.
General Track students will be asked questions that cover such areas as political institutions, e.g., legislative, executive, economic and social processes and institutions, organizational management, behavior, and ethics. Students in the health administration concentration will answer questions directed at that field.

Most relevant courses – General Track Students
- POLS 508 - Seminar: Legislative and Executive Processes
- POLS 532 - Public Policy
- POLS 533 - Administrative Ethics in the Public Sector
- POLS 503 - Government and Business
- POLS 535 - Public Organizations
- MGMT 515 - Advanced Managerial Theory

Most relevant courses – Health Concentration Students
- POLS 553 - Health Policy
- ECON 575 - Health Economics
- POLS 593 - Legal and Ethical Issues in Health Care

There are also many other courses offered at the University that would help students prepare to pass the comprehensive exams. Students should discuss their interests with the Director of the Graduate Program to be assured that their individual interests provide adequate preparation to pass the comprehensive exams.

☐ Final Draft of Independent Study

Your advisor will work with you to determine when a final draft of the independent study should be completed.

Here are important deadlines to keep in mind for completion of your Independent Study:

- **Final Draft of Independent Study to Advisor:** At least one week prior Reading and Review Day
- **Final Report on Candidate:** Prior to Reading and Review Day
- **Presentation of Independent Study to Program Assessment Committee:** No later than the last day of the semester
Final Report of Candidate to Graduate School

This step is completed by the advisor for your Independent Study and signed by the Graduate Director, however you should still be aware of the deadline for this important step as it must be completed in order to graduate from the program.

This step must be completed by your advisor before Reading and Review Day. This report indicates that you have satisfactorily completed your Comprehensive Exams and your Independent Study. It is important that you remain in communication with your advisor to ensure that this step is completed on time.

Presentation of Independent Study

Students completing a Thesis or Independent Study will make a presentation to their Program’s Assessment Committee before graduating. Your Program Director will not assign a grade for you Independent Study until this requirement is met.

The purpose of the presentation is to allow the Program Assessment Committee to gather information to assess whether the Graduate Program is meeting its goals and objectives. The assessment will focus on the student’s ability to communicate effectively in written and oral fashions. Students will not receive a grade on this presentation. Instead, there will be documentation that the student successfully completed the presentation. However, in order to receive the grade for your written Independent Study, you must complete this presentation.

The presentation can be scheduled once the student has received notification from their Independent Study advisor that the final draft of their paper was adequately completed. It is common for presentations to be scheduled during finals week, but keep in mind that the presentation must be complete before the last day of the semester.

For more information on the presentation, refer to the Independent Study Guidebook.

For more guidance with the presentation requirement, contact your advisor and/or the Graduate Director.
Graduation:

Students must apply for graduation early in the semester they are planning to graduate. The deadline for application is within the first month of the semester and therefore students are encouraged to complete this step as soon as possible once the semester begins.

Complete the steps at the online graduation registration page:
https://conted.und.edu/GraduationOnline/