

Doctor of Philosophy in Geological Engineering

Admission Requirements

1. A baccalaureate degree in an Engineering discipline with a GPA of 3.3 or higher or a Master of Science degree in an engineering discipline with a GPA of 3.0.
2. Satisfy the Graduate School's English Language Proficiency requirements as published in the Graduate Catalog.
3. In addition to meeting the general provisions in the UND graduate catalog and the minimum requirements in items 1-2 above, candidates are assessed using a holistic process that considers Student's Record of Publications, GRE test scores (for students who are applying with a B.S. Engineering degree from a non-ABET accredited program), transcripts of previous college work, relevant research and work experience, letters of recommendation, research interests, and English language skills. Students must specify a track on their admission form to facilitate this evaluation.
4. A student holding a non-Engineering degree or who does not meet the minimum requirements in items 1-2 above may apply to one of the Master of Science degree programs in the College of Engineering and Mines. Students successfully completing a UND M.S. Engineering degree will be considered to satisfy the requirements of items 1-2 above; however, these students shall still be subject to the holistic evaluation process described in item 3 with the exception that new GRE test scores will not be required.
5. Students admitted to an engineering M.S.G.E. program but meeting the minimum requirements in items 1-2 above, may after one calendar year, and upon the recommendation of his/her advisory committee, request to by-pass the Master's degree and work directly toward the Ph.D. degree. The recommendation of the advisory committee shall be brought to a vote by the program graduate committee relevant to the degree track requested by the student. A minimum of one week before such a meeting, the program graduate committee shall be notified and provided with the student's updated file which shall consist of the materials used for application into the M.S.G.E. program, a transcript of all academic work completed at UND, and any additional materials the student wishes to have considered. If the recommendation is approved by the relevant graduate committee, the student will be given the qualifying exam (see Section 8 under Degree Requirements below). Approval of a student's research proposal and passing of this exam will advance the student to Approved Status in the Doctoral Program in Geological Engineering.

Residence Requirements

The purpose of residence requirements is to provide an opportunity for a sustained and concentrated intellectual effort, to provide for immersion in an academic research environment, and to permit extensive interaction with fellow students and faculty of the Harold Hamm School of Geology and Geological Engineering. Within the first two years of graduate work at UND, at least two consecutive semesters must be completed in residence. During residency, a student must be registered for at least 9 credits in a semester, or be a graduate research or teaching assistant taking the appropriate credits to qualify as a full-time student. The remainder of the credits required for the degree can be completed in a manner to accommodate the student's fiscal, family, job-related, and other constraints with the consent of the student's adviser. The program of study must be completed within the seven-year period normally allowed for graduate programs.

Under special circumstances, the student in conjunction with his/her Graduate Advisory Committee and the Geological Engineering Graduate Committee, can petition the Dean of the Graduate School for variances in this policy.

Degree Requirements

Students seeking the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of North Dakota must satisfy all general requirements set forth by the Graduate School as well as particular requirements set forth by the Harold Hamm School of Geology and Geological Engineering Doctoral Program.

The following requirements are in addition to the UND Graduate School general requirements for the Ph.D.:

1. Completion of 90 semester credits beyond the Baccalaureate degree
2. Maintenance of at least a 3.0 GPA for all classes completed as a graduate student.
3. Scholarly Tools: Proficiency in mathematics demonstrated by completing nine approved credits of mathematics-intensive coursework (equivalent to UND 400-level or higher courses) with a grade of B or better which must include at least one course in numerical analysis. Scholarly tools courses taken for graduate credit after a student has enrolled in a graduate program at UND may be counted to fulfill requirements listed in Item 5 below.
4. A maximum of 30 credit hours can be transferred from a Master's program.
5. A minimum of 30 credit hours must be doctoral research and dissertation.
6. Exactly 3 credit hours of GEOE 493 Selected Topics in Geological Engineering.
7. A minimum of 39 credit hours of coursework are required (up to 21 credit hours of coursework may be transferred from a Master's program in fulfilling this requirement subject to the credit transfer limits described in the general section of this graduate catalog). The coursework shall include a minimum of 27 credit hours of Geological Engineering (or relevant courses with the consent of advisor) coursework selected from the approved list of courses. Equivalent graduate level coursework may be transferred from a Master's program.
8. Successful completion of a qualifying examination, taken no earlier than the end of their first year in residence and no later than the end of their second year of residence. The qualifying examination includes the following three sections.

Section I

It will cover four general areas of their selected engineering track. Selection of the four general areas for this examination shall require the approval of the candidate's faculty adviser and the track-specific Ph.D. Graduate Director.

Three results for each of the four sections of the examination can be obtained:

1. pass
2. provisional pass
3. fail

Candidates obtaining a result of "provisional pass" for any section of the exam will be required to remediate the topical area in which the provisional pass was received in accordance to stipulations specified by the examiner, with approval of the track-specific Graduate Director. Candidates who fail one or more sections of the exam will be allowed one opportunity to repeat that section of the exam. The reexamination must take place no later than 13 months after the initial examination attempt. A direct admit student who fails an exam a second time may request to be reclassified as a Master's student and complete a track-appropriate Master of Science degree and then reapply to the Doctoral Program.

Section II

A detailed written doctoral research proposal must be submitted to the committee. The proposal should cover:

1. a literature review of the relevant field of research related to the project
2. proposed methods
3. preliminary results (simulation or experiment)
4. the objectives of the proposed project, and
5. tasks and the timeline of the proposed research in a Gantt chart.

The report should be reviewed and approved by the student advisor. Then, at least three weeks prior to the next step, the report should be distributed to the student's Graduate Advisory Committee members for their review and grading.

Each of the above (1-5) components will be evaluated and graded (0 to 20). To pass the written exam, student should earn a minimum of 16/20 in each category. All grades from the student's Graduate Advisory Committee members will be averaged to determine a grade in each category.

If the report earns a passing grade a date can be scheduled for an oral presentation (i.e., Section III). If failed, the student has the opportunity to revise and resubmit the report to their Graduate Advisory Committee for re-evaluation.

Section III

An oral comprehensive examination should be presented to the Graduate Advisory Committee on the research topics described in the above section (II-1 to II-5). Three results for the **oral exam** can be obtained: 1) pass; 2) provisional pass; and 3) fail. Candidates obtaining a result of "provisional pass" will be allowed to advance to Candidacy status after completion of stipulations specified by the examining committee plus obtaining a passing result on a retest for the portion of the exam covered by the stipulations. Candidates who fail the exam will be allowed one opportunity to repeat the exam in less than 6 months as specified by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee. A student who fails an exam a second time may request to be reclassified as a Master's student and complete a track-appropriate Master of Science degree and then reapply to the Doctoral Program.

1. After successful completion of the written research proposal and oral presentation, an annual oral progress report should be presented to the Graduate Advisory Committee. A part of these presentations will include details on the dissertation research progress and plan. Any deviation from the approved research objectives as stated and documented in the research proposal must be approved and justified by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee.
2. A candidate for the degree must complete the original basic research investigation as documented in the research proposal. Each candidate will complete the research investigation to the satisfaction of the research adviser and the Graduate Advisory Committee and will prepare a written dissertation covering the research. The project must represent an original and independent investigation by the student. It is expected that the results of the research will be submitted for publication in refereed research journals. The candidate will submit the dissertation to the examining committee at least four weeks prior to defense date. The examining committee consists of the PhD committee and an external examiner from outside the University of North Dakota. The external examiner is selected by the Geological Engineering Graduate Committee from a list of three candidates proposed by the advisor. The external examiner should not have any common publications with the student's advisor or student and can be from academia or industry with an expertise relevant to the student's research. The student and advisor should not contact the external examiner directly before or after.
3. The candidate must present and successfully defend their dissertation at the final examination (see School of Graduate Studies requirements (<https://und.edu/academics/graduate-school/>)). Four results of the examination can be obtained: 1) pass; 2) minor revision 3) major revision and 4) fail. For minor revisions there is no need for another defense session and upon revising the dissertation the examining committee can pass the student. For major revisions the student is asked to fundamentally revise the methodologies and schedule another defense session. If failed, the student will not be able to obtain a PhD degree and may request to be reclassified as a Master's student and complete a Master of Science degree.
4. At least two peer-reviewed ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) journals (as the first author) and two peer-reviewed conference papers (as the first author) submitted with the consent of the primary faculty advisor.