

# ANTHROPOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Department of Anthropology, New Mexico State University

Office: Breland Hall 331  
Phone: 575-646-2725

*Last Revised: August 13, 2023*

# Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	iii
Hello!.....	1
Who Are We? .....	1
Graduate Advisor .....	1
Committee Members.....	1
How Does the MA Program Work?.....	2
Curriculum Requirements.....	3
Undergraduate Deficiencies .....	3
Core Classes .....	3
Elective Classes .....	4
Thesis/Non-Thesis Projects.....	4
Choosing the Thesis or Non-Thesis Track .....	4
MA Proposal.....	4
Thesis Option .....	5
Non-Thesis Options.....	6
STAR Degree Audit.....	7
Applying to Graduate.....	8
Final Exam/Thesis or Non-Thesis Defense .....	8
How Do Graduate Minors Work? .....	9
How Do Graduate Certificates Work?.....	9
Graduate Certificate in Cultural Resource Management (CRM) .....	10
Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies.....	10
Policies .....	10
Provisional Admission .....	10
Non-degree Course Work/Transfer Credit .....	10
Academic Performance/Grades.....	11
S grade .....	11
C, D, and F grades.....	12
Incomplete grade.....	12
Academic Probation.....	12
Full-time/Part-time Status .....	12

Leave of Absence/Continuous Enrollment .....	13
NMSU Policies on Equity, Conduct, Research Integrity, and Safety .....	13
What Funding Opportunities are Available?.....	13
Scholar Dollar\$ .....	13
Graduate Employment.....	13
Graduate Teaching Assistantships .....	14
Graduate Research Assistantships .....	15
Work Policies.....	15
International Students .....	16
Travel Awards .....	16
Other Funding Opportunities.....	16
How Should I Plan My Degree?.....	16
Year 1 .....	17
Fall .....	17
Spring .....	17
Summer.....	18
Year 2 .....	18
Fall.....	18
Spring .....	19
More Resources .....	20
APPENDIX A: ANTHROPOLOGY MA PROGRAM CHECKLIST .....	21

## List of Tables

Table 1. Grade point calculations and grade codes.....	11
Table 2. semester 1 classes and goals.....	17
Table 3. Semester 2 classes and goals. ....	18
Table 4. Summer classes and goals.....	18
Table 5. semester 3 classes and goals.....	19
Table 6. Semester 4 classes and goals. ....	20

## Hello!

Welcome to the New Mexico State University (NMSU) graduate program in anthropology. NMSU's mission is "to serve the diverse needs of the state through comprehensive programs of education, research, extension and outreach, and public service" (NMSU 2022). The Department of Anthropology serves this mission by offering high-quality graduate degree and certificate programs and by fostering opportunities for our students to gain additional knowledge and skills through research, work, and service experiences. While we represent different subdisciplines—archaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology—we are united as anthropologists by our desire to understand humanity through research that is holistic, comparative, and evolutionary. We look forward to working with you on this educational journey, and to helping you identify and achieve your academic and professional goals.

## Who Are We?

At any given time, the Department of Anthropology typically employs regular (full-time) faculty, visiting or adjunct (part-time) faculty, a museum director and curator, and an administrative assistant. We also have emeriti (retired) and affiliated faculty/scholars who may be engaged in ongoing research projects. You can learn more about these people, and how to reach them, on our website: <https://anthropology.nmsu.edu/people.html>. You can also read about some of their current research on the department's "Projects" webpage, here: <https://anthropology.nmsu.edu/projects/index.html>.

## Graduate Advisor

When you begin the graduate program, you are automatically assigned an advisor—the department's "Graduate Advisor"—who you can contact with questions about the MA degree program. Different faculty may occupy this role at different times, but you can find the current Graduate Advisor listed on our website. The Graduate Advisor (sometimes also known as the Graduate Program Director) manages applications and admissions to the MA program, helps new graduate students prepare for classes, delivers the departmental GA assignments, coordinates with the Graduate School, and manages student records. Once you form your graduate committee, your committee members (especially your committee chair) will become your primary resources for questions about elective classes, your MA project, and any other research and professional opportunities. You can always contact the Graduate Advisor with questions and concerns related to the degree program, but your committee chair will be more familiar with your research and career goals and better prepared to advise you on those issues.

## Committee Members

As graduate students, you will need to form a graduate committee—and especially a chair of that committee—to supervise your Master's thesis/report project. Your committee must consist of at least *three* faculty members who meet the criteria<sup>1</sup> listed below. We recommend that you find a chair as soon as possible, and you will need a second committee member in order to hold your MA proposal

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/#academicprogramsofstudyttext>

hearing at the end of your first year. You don't need to have the final member—the Dean's Representative—until you are ready for your MA exam, though you are welcome to find one sooner.

1. **Committee Chair.** This person will be your primary advisor, once you have formed your committee. They must be from your home department (Anthropology); they must be tenured or tenure-track faculty (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor); and they must be a current member of the Graduate School Faculty. You can check the list of current graduate faculty on the Graduate School faculty directory, here: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/For%20Faculty%20and%20Staff/department-coordinators.html>
2. **Committee Member(s).** Your other committee member(s) must also be current members of the Graduate School Faculty. At least one committee member must be from your home department (Anthropology). If you are completing any graduate minor(s), you should also include representatives of those programs on your committee.
3. **Dean's Representative.** This person represents the Graduate School in your final MA exam, and ensures that your exam was fair and your work was of sufficient quality. They must be from outside of your home department, and they must also be a current member of the Graduate School Faculty.

Your committee chair will serve as the primary advisor/supervisor for your MA project, providing assistance and critical feedback as you prepare your MA proposal, collect data, and prepare your final thesis/report. Please remember that while finishing your degree should be *your* top priority, it isn't theirs. If you have questions, you may need to be proactive about tracking them down and getting answers—don't wait for them to come to you and tell you what to do!

In rare cases, your chair or other committee members may ask for a substitute. This may occur in cases where a faculty member takes a sabbatical leave, medical leave, or is otherwise off campus for an extended period of time.

## How Does the MA Program Work?

The Anthropology MA degree requires a minimum of 39 credit hours, though some students earn more credits as they complete requirements for graduate minors and/or certificates. The specific curriculum requirements for the MA degree are listed below. To graduate with your MA degree, you must earn at least a B in all required classes, and must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.<sup>2</sup> A summary of the curriculum requirements for the MA degree is presented below. Links to the current NMSU catalog entries for the Anthropology MA degree, as well as for graduate minors and graduate certificates managed by our department, are also available on our website: <https://anthropology.nmsu.edu/graduate.html>.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/anthropology-master-arts/#requirementstext>

## Curriculum Requirements

<b>Required Core Classes</b>	<b>6 credits</b>
ANTH 503: Anthropological Theory (3 credits, Fall only)	
ANTH 505: Issues in Anthropological Practice (3 credits, Spring only)	
<b>Elective Classes</b>	<b>27 credits (minimum)</b>
You must take at least 27 credits of graduate electives (9 classes).	
Of these, at least 21 credits (7 classes) must be in anthropology;	
up to 6 graduate credits may be taken outside of the department in	
fields related to your professional interests and goals.	
<b>MA Project (choose ONE option)</b>	<b>6 credits (minimum)</b>
Thesis option	
ANTH 599: Thesis	
Non-Thesis options	
ANTH 597: Internship	
ANTH 598: Special Research Problems	
All options require a successful proposal hearing, independent research/	
work, a final thesis or non-thesis report, and a passing final exam.	

## Undergraduate Deficiencies

An undergraduate anthropology degree is not required for entry into the anthropology MA program. However, applicants who lack the equivalent of ANTH 301: Cultural Anthropology, ANTH 315: Introduction to Archaeology, and ANTH 355: Introduction to Biological Anthropology may be required to take these courses. ANTH 350: Anthropological Theory (or the equivalent) is also recommended. It is important that you take care of these deficiencies as soon as possible. Completing these courses will enhance your performance at the graduate level and allow you to focus on your graduate courses.

If you have been admitted to the MA program with undergraduate deficiencies, you may enroll in ANTH 502: Fundamentals in Anthropology, a variable credit course. Students generally enroll in 1 credit hour of ANTH 502 for each undergraduate deficiency, and work with the Graduate Advisor to determine which classes are required and when is the best time to take them. Courses to meet undergraduate deficiencies may be taken under an S/U option, with S being a grade satisfactory to the professor. These courses will not affect the maximum number of S/U graduate credits permitted.

## Core Classes

The Anthropology MA degree requires you to take two “core” classes—ideally during your first year in the program. ANTH 503: Anthropological Theory is only offered in the fall. This class introduces you to our faculty, reviews key concepts within anthropology, and helps you identify potential committee members and research topics. ANTH 505: Issues in Anthropological Practice is only offered in the spring, and it builds on the previous class by requiring you to work with your committee to develop your MA proposal. You must complete your MA proposal hearing before you begin working on your thesis or non-thesis project.

## Elective Classes

We encourage you to work closely with your committee chair to develop a degree plan and select elective classes that are relevant to your interests and goals. With the prior consent and supervision of your committee chair, you may conduct in-depth research on particular topics through directed readings credits (ANTH 596), which can count toward the anthropology MA as elective credits. Students are limited to a maximum of 6 credits of ANTH 596. If you choose to complete a graduate minor or graduate certificate, you may “double dip” by counting up to 6 credits of classes outside of anthropology as elective credits for the anthropology MA.

## Thesis/Non-Thesis Projects

Some of our MA students are interested in applying to Anthropology PhD programs, while others plan to use their MA to gain professional employment. Some students wish to engage with the public or scholarly communities by completing a thesis that will be published online via Proquest. Others prefer to do research in “applied” settings where the data and associated reports may be restricted to specific audiences—for example, an archaeological survey conducted on federal land, or a health survey and associated report completed for an indigenous nation. All of our graduate students must complete a substantial project and defend that project in a final exam (“MA defense”) in order to earn their MA degree. However, because our students have varied interests and goals, we offer both thesis and non-thesis “tracks” for that MA project.

## Choosing the Thesis or Non-Thesis Track

Both thesis and non-thesis projects are equally challenging and both require a significant investment of time and effort, as is appropriate for a MA degree. The major differences between the two tracks are in the skills that they require/develop and the audiences that they address. A traditional anthropology thesis is geared toward an audience of academic anthropologists, and it requires you to develop your skills in academic research and writing. A thesis engages with current anthropological research, especially theory and method, in order to contribute something new and useful to other scholars who may be studying a similar subject in a different context. If you plan to apply to a PhD program, we recommend that you complete a thesis project. Non-thesis projects vary depending on the specific subfield and professional arena, but in general they focus on developing professional skills and engaging with an audience appropriate to that profession. Most non-thesis projects will require you develop your skills in the professional research methods and writing styles appropriate to that field.

Before you decide on a specific track, you should discuss your options and aspirations with your committee chair. Once you begin working on your thesis or non-thesis project, it will be very difficult if not impossible to change tracks, as each degree track requires different credits (ANTH 597, 598, or 599).

## MA Proposal

Regardless of whether you choose the thesis or non-thesis track, all anthropology MA students are required to develop a MA project proposal, submit the proposal document to their committee, and give an oral presentation to this committee of their research plan. This oral presentation is typically referred to as a proposal hearing. Any interested faculty member may attend. Students typically complete and present their proposal during their second semester, often working with their committee chair to develop the proposal as part of ANTH 505: Issues in Anthropological Practice.

Although your committee chair likely will offer specific instructions for preparing your proposal, the following guidelines may help you get started. The MA proposal typically includes the following elements:

- An **introduction** to your project that explains what you will do, why it is needed, and who it benefits.
- A **literature review** of the relevant and essential background information about your project. This may include a brief description of the cultural/historical/environmental context, a summary of previous work, and a discussion of theories and methods that you will employ. For an internship project, this section should include a solid review of literature relevant to that agency's mission and activities/programs.
- A **research design**, which includes your specific research questions, a description of the data you will need to collect in order to answer those questions, and the methods you will use to analyze those data. In the case of internship projects, it may be more appropriate to develop an internship plan that identifies the specific experiences and skills you hope to gain and your plan for achieving these goals during that internship.
- A **bibliography** or references cited section.
- A **schedule** leading to completion of your final exam and MA degree. This tentative schedule should include target deadlines for completing each phase of your MA project and degree.

## Thesis Option

There are many different types of thesis projects that may be appropriate, depending on your area of specialization and the strengths and preferences of your advisory committee. You could write a thesis on an applied topic or a traditional research topic; you could conduct field or laboratory research; you could employ qualitative, quantitative, mixed or other methods; you could write a theoretical thesis, a historical thesis, or a library thesis synthesizing published literature on a particular topic. We encourage you to work with your committee chair to choose a thesis project early in the program, and to develop a degree plan that serves your research needs and goals.

After your proposal hearing when you are ready to begin your MA thesis research, you will need to register in the section of ANTH 599: Master's Thesis that is assigned to your committee chair. All thesis credits require prior approval by the instructor, so make sure to ask your chair to enter the overrides needed to allow you to register for thesis credits. Please remember that thesis credit hours are intended for completing a thesis, and thesis credits cost more than other 500 level courses. *Once you register for ANTH 599, you must continue to register for at least 1 credit of ANTH 599 until you complete your thesis and graduate.*

In grading your thesis credits each semester, your chair (professor) will enter a grade of PR, indicating satisfactory progress, or U, indicating unsatisfactory progress. PR indicates that the student has devoted an adequate amount of time to the work scheduled but gives no indication of its quality. U indicates that the student has stopped work or is doing work of unacceptable quality. These symbols remain on the student's transcript permanently. Only credits graded PR accumulate toward the minimum of 6 thesis credits required for your degree.

Once you begin writing your MA Thesis, you should work closely with your committee chair to develop an outline appropriate for your research. In general, most theses will include the following elements, some of which can be revised from draft text in your MA Proposal:

- A **title page** (formatted according to the standards provided by the Graduate School)
- Various **front matter**, including a signature page, acknowledgements, curriculum vita, abstract, table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures.
- An **introduction** that describes and justifies your research topic.
- A **literature review** of the relevant and essential background information that your readers need to understand and evaluate your project. Again, this may include the cultural/historical/environmental context, a summary of previous work, and a discussion of your theories and methods.
- Your **research design**, which includes your specific research questions, the data you collected to answer these questions, and the methods you used to analyze those data.
- Your **results**, which describes your findings/what you learned, possibly with the aid of tables and figures.
- Your **conclusion**, which applies what you learned to back your research questions and explains what your research contributes to knowledge on this topic (in other words, why it matters).
- A **references cited** section.

The standard style guide used in anthropology theses is that of the American Anthropological Association,<sup>3</sup> which has adopted the Author-Date style of the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the Chicago Manual of Style.<sup>4</sup> You should also check the Graduate School guidelines to ensure that you are formatting the thesis document correctly, as this will save you time on later revisions. This information is available on their website, here: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/thesis-and-dissertation.html>.

## Non-Thesis Options

Non-thesis options vary depending on your subdiscipline and career goals; however, students will typically complete either an Internship (ANTH 597) or a Special Research Project (ANTH 598). The difference between the two options depends mostly on where and with whom you will work, and who is available to directly supervise that work.

### Internship (ANTH 597)

An internship project is intended to provide you with a structured experience that combines professional work experience and practical, on-the-job training within a private organization or public agency. You are expected to find a faculty member to serve as your committee chair and internship advisor, and then find a suitable organization willing to allow you to complete an internship project under their direct supervision, all before completing your MA proposal. You will be required to complete and submit an Internship Report to your graduate committee at the end of your internship, along with copies of any products you prepared as part of that internship. A representative from that

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://americananthro.org/publications/publishing-style-guide/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html)

organization/agency may be invited to attend your proposal hearing and any meetings, and should be invited to participate in your final exam (MA defense).

The Internship Report may follow the style and formatting guidelines used by that organization or agency. Although it is not written in the scholarly style of an MA thesis, it must reflect a serious academic effort grounded in a deep understanding of your chosen profession, familiarity with the relevant literature, and/or a strong theoretical foundation. The report should include the following elements:

- A **title page** with the report title, your name, your committee members, and the report date.
- Various **front matter**, including a curriculum vita, abstract, table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures (as appropriate).
- A **description** your specific internship activities.
- A **discussion** that integrates your course work and internship experiences.
- A precise **evaluation** of the strengths and weaknesses of the internship experiences, including any recommendations for the agency or department.
- A **references cited** section.
- Any reports or other work products prepared as part of the internship should be included as **appendices**.

### Special Research Report (ANTH 598)

A special research report project is intended to provide you with a structured experience that prepares you for professional work, but is managed and supervised solely by your graduate committee, often as part of a grant-funded project managed by your committee chair/members. A few examples of such projects include 1) a field research project and completion of the technical report and forms, 2) a museum collection inventory and evaluation project and completion of the management report, 3) the analysis of a (substantial) collection of artifacts and completion of the technical report, and 4) a museum conservation project and the associated conservation report. Curriculum/educational projects and virtual or physical museum exhibit projects may also qualify, depending on how those projects are managed and supervised. As with all MA projects, you must begin by finding faculty members willing to serve on your committee and comfortable with supervising this type of project.

Your Special Research Report will likely contain many of the elements included in the Thesis or Internship Report; however, the specific content and structure will vary depending on the purpose and professional context of your project. Please work closely with your committee chair to develop an outline and structure appropriate for your research.

### STAR Degree Audit

The Graduate School uses NMSU's STAR Degree Audit program when verifying degrees to ensure that you have satisfied the catalog requirements listed for our MA degree. You can access this program too in order to run audits of your degree to ensure that you are making adequate progress. It should appear as a link on your mynmsu.edu homepage, but you can also access it directly here: <https://records.nmsu.edu/students/star-degree-audit.html>. The STAR Degree Audit program audits each graduate degree, minor, and certificate separately, so if you are combining several options you will need to run an audit for each one independently.

In most cases, this system works well, and it allows you to track your progress and identify potential problems before it's too late. Unfortunately, this program sometimes struggles with unusual credits or new/uncommon classes. If you identify a problem in your STAR Audit, please save a PDF copy of that audit report and send it to the Graduate Advisor, along with an explanation of the problem. They may need to address the problem by preparing and submitting a Degree Audit Exception form to the Graduate School. In especially challenging cases, they may ask you to prepare and submit a Program of Study form instead, so that the Graduate School will use your Program of Study instead of the STAR Degree Audit when evaluating your degree application.

## Applying to Graduate

You must file an Application for Degree at the beginning of the semester that you plan to graduate, with the recommendation of your committee chair. You must be enrolled for at least one credit during the semester that you graduate. There are usually two deadlines for applications: one at the beginning of the semester with the standard fee, and one about five weeks later with an additional late fee. The application deadlines are listed on the Graduate School Calendar, available here: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20School%20Calendar.html>.

## Final Exam/Thesis or Non-Thesis Defense

A final examination is required for *all* students receiving a Master's degree from NMSU, regardless of whether they have selected the thesis or non-thesis track. This exam (also known as a MA defense) must be taken after the student has completed their MA thesis/report and before the last date allowed by the Graduate School. The examining committee shall consist of at least three voting members: the Committee Chair, Committee Member(s), and the Dean's Representative. The purpose of this oral examination is to test the candidate's general knowledge of anthropology and any minor fields and their specific knowledge of their MA project topic.

It is essential that you wait until your committee chair has read through your MA thesis/report draft and given you the go ahead to share it with the rest of your committee before you schedule your final exam. Your chair will almost certainly require at least one round of revisions before you send your thesis/report to your committee, so we recommend that you submit a complete draft to your chair at least one month before you hope to schedule your final exam. This is for your own good! Your chair wants to keep you from submitting a thesis/report that will not pass, because if you schedule the final exam and you fail, you've basically failed out of the graduate program.

You must schedule your final exam (MA defense) at least 10 business days before the exam by completing the Masters Final Exam form and submitting it to the Graduate School. This form asks for the date, time, and location of the final exam, and requires signatures from you, your committee chair ("Student's Advisor"), a representative from your graduate minor if you completed a graduate minor ("Minor Faculty"), and the Department Head. Please leave yourself plenty of time to find a date, time, and place that works for all committee members and to collect all of the necessary signatures before the form is due. You can find the form on the Graduate School website, here: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20School%20Calendar.html>.

## How Do Graduate Minors Work?

According to the NMSU catalog, “a graduate minor is based on at least 9 graduate credits in courses encompassing a recognized field of study *outside of the student’s major*” (emphasis added)<sup>5</sup>. The Department of Anthropology offers graduate minors in anthropology, archaeology, and food studies to students earning graduate degrees in other programs; however, these minors are not available to anthropology MA students because they fall within their graduate major. You should be aware that adding a graduate minor will likely add time to your degree plan, because the Anthropology MA degree only allows 6 credits from outside of anthropology.

We recommend that you meet with your committee chair to discuss whether any graduate minors may be appropriate and relevant for you. In the past, anthropology MA students have considered or completed graduate minors in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Native American Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Security Studies. You can view the complete list of graduate minors in the NMSU Graduate School catalog, here: <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/#graduateminorstext>.

## How Do Graduate Certificates Work?

A graduate certificate is a certificate program that is designed to develop a focused skill or area of expertise. No transfer credits may be applied to a graduate certificate program, and the program must be completed within three years.<sup>6</sup> The Department of Anthropology manages two interdisciplinary graduate certificate programs that have proven to be beneficial for our MA students: Cultural Resource Management (CRM) and Museum Studies. You can find a complete list of graduate certificates here: <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/#graduatecertificatestext>.

A graduate certificate is just that—a certificate. It is not a graduate degree, and so it will not qualify you (by itself) for financial aid or a graduate assistantship. Unlike a graduate minor, the graduate certificate is its own distinct program separate from the MA degree. This means that if you are currently enrolled in the anthropology MA degree program, you must apply separately to be admitted to a graduate certificate program. And, when you’ve finished the required coursework for this certificate, you will need to apply to graduate from the certificate program. A student who successfully completes a graduate certificate program will receive a certificate of completion statement on their official transcript and a formal certificate from the NMSU Graduate School.

Our graduate certificate programs are described below. If you intend to apply to one of our graduate certificate programs, please contact the Graduate Advisor. They can guide you through the application process and can advise you on what classes will be offered when.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/#academicprogramsofstudyttext>

<sup>6</sup> <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/#admissionstext>

## Graduate Certificate in Cultural Resource Management (CRM)

This certificate program provides specialized training in CRM law and practice for students seeking public- and private-sector careers in heritage management and historic preservation. It requires 18 credits: 6 credits of required classes and 12 elective credits. Both required classes and most of the electives are offered by anthropology, but students are required to take at least one class from outside of anthropology. The required courses are offered at least once every two years, and the certificate can be completed within 3 semesters.

## Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies

This certificate program provides training in museology, public history, exhibit development, and conservation/collection management for students seeking employment in museums. It requires 18 credits: 9 credits of required classes in anthropology, art, and history; 3 credits of internship; and 6 elective credits. The required courses are offered at least once every two years, and the certificate can be completed within 3 semesters.

## Policies

### Provisional Admission

A student who does not meet the minimum scholastic requirements for acceptance by the Graduate School as a regular student (“Master’s Regular”) may be admitted provisionally (“Master’s Provisional”) by Graduate School with the recommendation of the department.<sup>7</sup> A student who is admitted provisionally must complete their first three graduate-level classes (9 credits) with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Once they have successfully completed this requirement, they will be shifted to “Master’s Regular” status. A provisional student who does not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement after 9 graduate credit hours is subject to dismissal.

A student with Master’s Provisional status is not allowed to work as a teaching assistant, and so they are ineligible for Graduate Assistantships (GAs) from the department. They are permitted to work as a Graduate Research Assistant or a grader for one semester. To hire a provisional student, the department must submit an official letter to the Graduate School requesting permission.

### Non-degree Course Work/Transfer Credit

The NMSU Graduate School catalog allows students to enroll in graduate classes under undeclared/non-degree status.<sup>8</sup> Under these conditions, non-degree status students are allowed to take a maximum of 9 credits, which they may then transfer into the anthropology MA program and count toward the MA degree. This works for both elective and required classes.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/#admissionstext>

<sup>8</sup> <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/#admissionstext>

The Graduate School also allows students enrolled in similar (accredited) degree programs at other universities to request permission to transfer graduate credits into NMSU graduate programs<sup>9</sup>. In these situations, the Department of Anthropology may allow a student to transfer up to 6 credits of elective classes. All core required classes must be taken at NMSU. If a current anthropology MA student wants to enroll in a class at another institution and then transfer those credits to the anthropology MA program, that student must obtain *prior approval* by the Graduate Advisor, Department Head, and Dean of the Graduate School. For all proposed transfer credits, the anthropology program requires that the students have earned a grade of B or better. The Transfer of Credit Form is available on the Graduate School website at: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>.

## Academic Performance/Grades

Graduate students are expected to apply themselves intensively to the courses in which they are enrolled. A student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in all graduate-level courses taken at NMSU. Courses transferred from the non-degree program at NMSU or from other institutions, as well as courses graded S/U or PR (i.e., thesis credits), will not be included in determining GPAs.

Students should be aware that NMSU uses fractionated grading, though not all professors elect to use this system. Table 1 below explain how fractionated grades are calculated, and the significance of letter codes used on transcripts.<sup>10</sup>

**TABLE 1. GRADE POINT CALCULATIONS AND GRADE CODES.**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Grade Point Per Credit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Significance</b>
A+	4.0	W	Withdrawal
A	4.0	N	Grade not submitted
A-	3.7	CR	Credit authorized, but no letter grade
B+	3.3	IP	In progress
B	3.0	PR	Progress on graduate thesis
B-	2.7	S	Satisfactory work
C+	2.3	U	Unsatisfactory work
C	2.0	I	Incomplete
C-	2.0	AU	Audit
D+, D, D-	1.0		
F	0		

## S grade

An S grade is a grade satisfactory to the professor and is normally equivalent to the letter grade of B or higher. The S grade is the final grade that the student will receive upon completion of their

<sup>9</sup> <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/#transfercreditstext>

<sup>10</sup> <https://records.nmsu.edu/students/grades.html>

thesis. During the writing of the thesis, the student will receive either a PR to denote progress each semester or U to denote not making progress.

## C, D, and F grades

Although NMSU allows C grade to be counted toward the requirement for an advanced degree, this is not considered acceptable graduate-level performance. The Department of Anthropology requires that students earning a C in anthropology core classes retake these classes. Courses where the student earns only a D or F will not be counted toward a graduate degree, although such grades are calculated in determining the GPA. Therefore, any grades of D or F must be compensated for by the necessary hours of A if the student is to earn the 3.0 GPA required for the degree.

## Incomplete grade

The grade of Incomplete is given for passable work that could not be completed due to circumstances beyond the student's control that develop after the deadline to withdraw from the class.<sup>11</sup> The professor will complete an "I Grade Information Form" that states the necessary steps to complete the remaining course work. This form will be placed in the student's file, and the student will sign this document before it is placed in the file. The work must be completed within 12 months after the Incomplete grade is assigned and prior to the student's graduation, or within a shorter period of time if specified by the professor on the "I Grade Information Form." An incomplete grade not changed by the assigning professor within 12 months and prior to graduate shall remain an "I" grade thereafter.

## Academic Probation

Academic records of all anthropology graduate students are reviewed at the end of the semester. A student whose cumulative grade point average is less than 3.0 will be so informed and will be placed on probation. If a student fails to maintain a 3.0 average and to show substantial improvement in the quality of work (as determined by the Dean of the Graduate School) during the next semester, the student will be suspended from the Graduate School.

## Full-time/Part-time Status

A full-time graduate student is enrolled for 9 or more credits per semester, while a part-time graduate student is enrolled in 1–8 credits per semester. NMSU offers a reduced tuition rate to non-resident (out-of-state) students enrolled in fewer than 8 credits. Graduate Assistants must be full-time students, and thus are required to take at least 9 credits per semester while employed in that position.

We encourage you to consider your outside workload and commitments when planning your course load. If you are working part-time or full-time off-campus while working on your MA degree, you should limit yourself to one or two classes (3–6 credits) per semester. Full-time students without major commitments typically enroll in three classes (9–10 credits) per semester. In rare instances, graduate students may enroll in four classes (12 credits), though we discourage this because graduate-level classes require more time and work (and better grades) than undergraduate classes. If you are

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://arp.nmsu.edu/4-55/>

considering taking more than three classes during a semester, please consult with your committee chair or the Graduate Advisor.

## Leave of Absence/Continuous Enrollment

Students working on the MA degree in anthropology who plan an interruption in studies for a calendar year should address a request for a leave of absence through the Department Head to the Dean of the Graduate School. The request should include the beginning date and the anticipated ending date for the period of absence. A graduate student on a leave of absence will be expected not to use university facilities and therefore will pay no fees. Time spent in a leave of absence status will not be counted toward the degree time limits. A graduate student who fails to register for one calendar year without obtaining a leave of absence from the Graduate School will be considered withdrawn from the university and will be required to apply for re-admission to resume graduate studies.

## NMSU Policies on Equity, Conduct, Research Integrity, and Safety

Anthropology graduate students, like all NMSU students, are expected to comply with NMSU's Administrative Rules and Procedures (APR). While many aspects of the APR may apply in different situations, the ones that are typically most relevant to anthropology graduate students are those involving academic and social codes of conduct, research integrity and intellectual property, and safety. Direct links to the relevant chapters are provided below:

- Chapter 3 – Ethics, Equity, and Equal Opportunity: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/chapter-3/>
- Chapter 5 – Student Life and Conduct: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/chapter-5/>
  - This chapter includes a discussion of the procedures for addressing allegations of academic misconduct and violations of the student social code of conduct.
- Chapter 11 – Research and Intellectual Property: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/chapter-11/>
- Chapter 16 – Safety and Risk Management: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/chapter-16/>

## What Funding Opportunities are Available?

### Scholar Dollar\$

NMSU uses a single application called Scholar Dollar\$ (pronounced dollars) for all scholarship applications, processing, and awards made through the university. For this reason, you should immediately begin a Scholar Dollar\$ application so that you can be considered for all NMSU scholarships, and so that any awards made to you (including travel or research awards) can be distributed to your account. Begin your application here: <https://scholarships.nmsu.edu/>.

### Graduate Employment

Qualified graduate students may be offered limited employment by NMSU to help fund their graduate work. There are two categories of employment: student graduate assistantships, which are typically salaried positions, and student graduate specialists, which are usually paid an hourly wage to complete specific tasks. Student graduate assistantships are typically divided into two types: graduate teaching assistantships (often referred to as GAs) and graduate research assistantships (more commonly referred to as RAs). In the past, our students have mostly received GAs and RAs, both from within and outside of our department. The links below direct you to resources relevant to these positions.

- Human Resources-salary and wage tables: <https://hr.nmsu.edu/general-resources/employment1/salary.html>
- Graduate School-GA resources page: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga-and-union/Graduate%20Assistant%20Resources.html>

## Graduate Teaching Assistantships

The Department of Anthropology is able to fund a limited number of Graduate Assistantships (GAs) each year to assist with the teaching mission. The award of a Graduate Assistantship (GA) is intended to both provide financial support to graduate students, and to provide a positive learning experience to foster graduate student's professional development.

### Applications

The deadline for submitting an application for a GA is February 15 for the following academic year. Students applying to our MA program can ask to be considered for a GA as part of their application packet. The following criteria are normally used for awarding assistantships: (1) academic grade point average, (2) letters of recommendation, and (3) other evidence of professional promise. Preference is given to students who are admitted to regular, rather than provisional graduate status. Financial need is not a consideration in awarding GAs.

### Awards

GAs are normally awarded for one academic year (9 months), but in rare cases awards may be made for a semester. Full-time GA positions work 20 hours/week during the fall and spring semesters, while half-time positions work 10 hours/week. Work assignments are developed through joint consultation among the department head, faculty members, and teaching assistants. All GAs are expected to develop a work schedule, including regular office hours. Each GA should apprise the department of this schedule each semester.

GAs may be renewed for a second academic year if funding is available, but there is no guaranteed support for two years. In all cases, departmental support is limited to two academic years (4 semesters). Renewal of an assistantship is not automatic. Second-year students who wish to renew their assistantship must submit an application to the Graduate Advisor before February 15. In general, GAs are not awarded or renewed for students who are entering their third year in the MA program.

### Responsibilities

GAs are assigned to work with individual courses for individual professors and can thus be expected to assist with professional activities that are part of the professor's teaching, advising, and service or outreach related to student success, with the emphasis on teaching responsibilities, especially those that are linked with the department's service to the General Education curriculum. The normal GA assignment is for 10 hours per week for the supervising professor, and professors should work to ensure that workloads do not exceed 10 hours unless the GA has a special award that exceeds 0.25 FTE.

GA activities to support the professor's teaching of undergraduate courses might include maintaining, editing, and proofing Canvas pages, writing and grading of examinations, maintaining student records, guest lecture presentations, leading discussions, mentoring

students enrolled in the classes, holding office hours to assist students, supervising small group assignments and in-class exercises, facilitating in-class activities, teaching laboratory or recitation sections, and conducting study sessions prior to examinations. While the professor is responsible for the overall course content, grading, and assignment of final grades, the GA is expected to assist in the management of these courses to ensure adequate support for students enrolled. The overall goal is to ensure the quality of undergraduate instruction and foster student success.

As time permits, GAs might engage in activities that support the professor's curricular development, recruitment, advising, and student retention responsibilities. Appropriate activities might include conducting library and internet searches, abstracting literature, organizing laboratory and teaching collections, developing publicity materials for academic programs, presenting information about anthropology programs and curriculum in schools or community outreach venues, and similar activities that support the instructional mission of the Department of Anthropology.

### Graduate Research Assistantships

Our faculty members are actively engaged in research, and several serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) on grant-funded projects that employ full-time graduate students. Depending on their interest and qualifications, students may be offered half-time or full-time Graduate Research Assistantships (RAs) to work on these projects. These positions may also come with partial or full funding for health insurance and tuition. The availability of these positions varies, and the PIs are solely responsible for recruiting and selecting candidates who possess the necessary knowledge and skills.

### Work Policies

Because our students often work for departments or divisions outside of our department, we encourage you to read the Graduate School's **Graduate Assistant Handbook**<sup>12</sup> and **Graduate Assistant Employment Guidelines**.<sup>13</sup> These documents are periodically updated, but the most current versions should be posted on the Graduate School's GA Resources page (link provided above under "Graduate Assistantships"). The handbook provides specific guidance regarding the responsibilities associated with these positions, as well as the specific policies and procedures. The handbook also provides guidance regarding "personal matters," especially involving issues that may develop between GAs and students, or GAs and faculty/departments. Copies of this handbook will be provided to new GAs and RAs at the department's fall orientation for graduate student employees. If you are unable to attend this orientation, you can download the document from the Graduate School website.

Graduate Assistants and Graduate Specialists are employed by NMSU, and thus are subject to NMSU Administrative Rules and Procedures (ARP), available here: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/>. GAs may be required to complete NMSU's mandatory annual compliance training as a condition of their employment. Graduate Assistants (but not Specialists) are also represented by a union, which has signed

---

<sup>12</sup> [https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/current-student-forms/Graduate Assistant Handbook.pdf](https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/current-student-forms/Graduate_Assistant_Handbook.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga-and-union/grad-assistant-forms/Guidelines on Employment of Graduate Assistants%20Jan%202023.pdf](https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga-and-union/grad-assistant-forms/Guidelines_on_Employment_of_Graduate_Assistants%20Jan%202023.pdf)

a collective bargaining agreement with NMSU. We encourage GAs to review that agreement, currently available via the Graduate School website: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga-and-union/collective-bargaining-agreement.html>. These agreements are renegotiated on a regular basis, so it is a good idea to check for updates.

If a grievance develops between a GA and their immediate supervisor, the initial informal step is to arrange a meeting between the employee (GA) and their immediate supervisor and/or Department Head in a good faith effort to resolve the problem. GAs may also consult the Graduate Advisor and/or their union representative for advice or assistance. If the matter is not resolved, the NMSU ARP and the GA Collective Bargaining Agreement provide guidance on additional steps to resolve grievances or respond to disciplinary action.

## International Students

International students are subject to different funding and employment requirements and restrictions than domestic students. We encourage international students to contact NMSU's International Students and Scholar Services office for advice and assistance. Their website and contact information are available here: <https://iss.nmsu.edu/>.

## Travel Awards

Graduate students who will be presenting at a professional conference are eligible to apply for funds to help defray travel expenses. Students can seek funds from the Graduate Student Council, the Associated Students of New Mexico State University (ASNMSU), the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, and the Department of Anthropology. Information and applications to secure travel funds are available through the Anthropology Graduate Student Organization (GSO).

## Other Funding Opportunities

We encourage you to speak with your committee members and other faculty about potential scholarships, grants, and work opportunities. Many of our graduate students have received funding for small humanities-oriented projects from NMSU's Southwest Border Cultures Institute (SBCI), which accepts applications every spring. Students have also received scholarships from regional organizations like the Archaeological Society of New Mexico and national organizations like the Society for American Archaeology and the Society for Applied Anthropology.

## How Should I Plan My Degree?

The best way to ensure that you complete your course and MA thesis/report requirements on time, and avoid unpleasant surprises, is to develop a degree plan. Appendix A at the end of this handbook is a checklist where you can list classes that you intend to take and fill in the semester and final grades as you complete them. We encourage you to meet with your advisor/committee chair to develop a degree plan that makes sense for your research interests and career goals.

The following sections provide a "roadmap" for what you should accomplish during each semester, especially if you plan to graduate in two years. These are goals, not requirements, but we include them here in the hope that it will help you develop a specific degree plan and timeline that works for you.

## Year 1

### Fall

Welcome to graduate school! You should have met/corresponded with the Graduate Advisor during the summer and registered for your fall classes. If you are taking classes full-time, you should be registered for the core theory class (ANTH 503) and two other graduate-level (500+) elective classes. During your first semester, all we really expect you to do is take classes, settle in, join or get to know the Anthropology Graduate Student Organization (GSO), and start talking with anthropology faculty to see who you want to work with and what types of projects are available for you to work on. If possible, choose your committee chair. Your first year will go much more smoothly if you have a clear set of attainable goals, and a committee chair can help you define those goals. Also, please remember that you have to *ask* potential committee members to serve as your chair or committee member! They may have sabbatical or research plans that would make it challenging or impossible, so it's important to have a direct conversation to make sure *everyone* understands what they are doing and who they are working with.

TABLE 2. SEMESTER 1 CLASSES AND GOALS.

Classes	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ANTH 503 (3 cr)</li><li>• 2 elective classes (6 cr)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Join the GSO</li><li>• Choose a committee chair</li><li>• Identify one or more MA project topics</li></ul>

### Spring

During your second semester, if you are taking classes full-time, you should be registered for the issues in anthropological practice class (ANTH 505) and two other graduate-level (500+) elective classes. Your primary goals for this semester should be to 1) work with your chair to develop your degree plan, 2) assemble your MA committee, 3) write your MA proposal, and, if possible, 4) hold your MA proposal hearing.

Here's how this works. First, you choose an MA project, a committee chair willing to mentor you through that project, and at least one other committee member from the anthropology department. Then, you work with your chair to develop your MA project proposal in ANTH 505. The proposal is described earlier in this handbook, but as a reminder it typically includes an *introduction* to your project; a *literature review* of the relevant background information about your topic; your *research design*; and a *schedule* with target dates for each phase of the project. You should also decide (in conversation with your chair) whether you will take the thesis track and produce a MA thesis or take the non-thesis track and produce a MA internship or special research project report.

Once your chair agrees that your proposal is ready for a hearing, you will send this proposal to your committee and reserve a time and space (physical or virtual) for the proposal hearing. Check with your chair about their expectations for your proposal hearing, but in most cases you will do a brief presentation of your proposed research topic and research design (~15 minutes) and then you will discuss that plan with the committee. The purpose of this hearing is to help you clarify the details of your research plan and fix any potential problems so that, after the hearing, you are ready to begin collecting data and writing your MA thesis/report. The goal is to schedule your proposal hearing before the end of the spring semester so that you can begin working on your MA project in the summer.

**TABLE 3. SEMESTER 2 CLASSES AND GOALS.**

Classes	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANTH 505 (3 cr, core requirement)</li> <li>• 2 elective classes (6 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with your chair to develop your degree plan</li> <li>• Assemble your graduate committee</li> <li>• Write your MA project proposal</li> <li>• Hold your proposal hearing</li> </ul>

## Summer

The MA degree requires 39 credits, which translates to four semesters of full-time enrollment (9 credits/semester) plus 3 credits of summer fieldwork/research. You are not required to complete these credits during the summer; however, if you wish to graduate in two years, you will need to take these summer credits in order to complete your course requirements. We encourage you to use these credits to conduct the field work, laboratory/museum work, or library research you need to complete your MA project. Alternatively, you may take summer credits to complete a course that provides essential training or valuable experience. Many archaeology students take the six-week archaeological field school (ANTH 522, 6 credits) because a field school is required for most archaeology jobs and field experience (as a student, crew chief, or graduate assistant) is always beneficial. Several museum students have applied for and completed summer internships with local or state museum.

It is also a good idea to start running STAR Degree Audits of your MA degree, if you haven't already done so, to ensure that you are making progress and to identify any potential problems with your degree plan. You may also discuss opportunities to present your research at regional or national conferences with your committee chair.

**TABLE 4. SUMMER CLASSES AND GOALS.**

Classes	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3–6 cr of field training, field research, readings, or internship (ANTH 522, 587, 596, 597)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run STAR degree audit to check degree progress</li> <li>• Begin research or data collection for MA project (assuming that you have completed your proposal hearing)</li> </ul>

## Year 2

### Fall

During your second year you should begin registering for your 6 required thesis/non-thesis credits with your committee chair. You should meet with your chair to discuss a specific schedule and deadlines, but most students register for 3 thesis/non-thesis credits in the fall and 3 in the spring, and then complete their remaining elective requirements by registering for two additional classes each semester. You should have already decided (with your chair) whether to pursue a thesis or non-thesis track, so make sure to register for the appropriate credits. *It is very difficult to switch tracks once you've registered for credits*, so please be prepared to stick with your decision. If you register for 3 thesis/non-thesis credits during the fall, you should plan to complete your MA project research/data collection, create an outline for your thesis/report, and begin writing that thesis/report.

TABLE 5. SEMESTER 3 CLASSES AND GOALS.

Classes	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MA thesis/non-thesis (3 cr)</li> <li>• 2 elective classes (6 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete research/data collection for MA project</li> <li>• Develop MA thesis/report outline with committee chair</li> <li>• Begin writing MA thesis/report</li> </ul>

## Spring

You will need to keep track of a *lot of deadlines* during your final semester, so be proactive and be prepared. First, you will need to register for and complete all of your remaining elective classes and thesis/non-thesis credits. Then, you will need to apply to graduate from your MA degree (and graduate certificates, if applicable) before the deadline listed on the Graduate School calendar. Make sure to run one final STAR Degree Audit to be sure that you are on track to graduate, and if you see any problems, contact the Graduate Advisor ASAP. Finally, to graduate with your MA degree, you need to complete the required curriculum *and* you need to complete your MA thesis/report, pass your final exam, and submit your MA thesis to Proquest or your MA report to your committee and the Department Head—all before the Graduate School deadlines. If you don't finish your thesis/report on time during the semester in which you hoped to graduate, you will have to enroll again the following semester for at least one credit, because you must be enrolled in at least one credit in order to graduate. You will also need to apply to graduate (again) during that semester.

If you are on the thesis track, the Graduate School deadlines for your MA hearing are relatively early in the semester in order to allow sufficient time for you to submit your thesis to Proquest for review and publication. The exact dates vary (check the Graduate School calendar), but in general you must complete your final exam by early November in the fall or early April in the spring. To schedule your exam, you have to submit the Masters Final Exam Form to the Graduate School at least 10 business days (2 weeks) earlier, and you can't schedule your exam until your committee chair has reviewed your thesis and said that it is ready to defend. For this reason, we strongly recommend that you submit a complete thesis draft to your chair at least one month before, so that there is time for them to review it and for you to make the necessary revisions. The general timeline for students on the thesis track is to submit a complete draft of their thesis to their chair by **February 15/ September 15**, revise and submit the final thesis to the committee and schedule their final exam by **March 15/October 15**, and then complete their final exam before the deadline listed on the Graduate School calendar. The final, formatted thesis must be submitted to Proquest for publication before that deadline, which is usually a week after the deadline for the final exam.

If you are on the non-thesis track, the Graduate School deadlines fall a bit later because your MA report will not be published on Proquest. Again, the exact dates vary (check the Graduate School calendar), but in general you must complete your final exam by the last day of classes. To schedule your exam, you have to submit the Masters Final Exam Form to the Graduate School at least 10 business days (2 weeks) earlier—usually in late April (spring) or November (fall)—and you can't schedule your exam until your committee chair has reviewed your MA report and said that it is ready to defend. For this reason, we strongly recommend that you submit a complete draft of your MA report to your chair at least one month before, so that there is time for them to review it and for you to make the necessary revisions. After your final exam, make sure to submit final copies of your MA report to your committee members and to the Department Head.

TABLE 6. SEMESTER 4 CLASSES AND GOALS.

Classes	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MA thesis/non-thesis (3 cr)</li> <li>• Remaining elective classes (3–6 cr, or more if needed them to complete graduate minor/graduate certificate requirements)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply to graduate from degree and certificate programs before the deadline (see the Graduate School calendar).</li> <li>• Submit a complete draft of your MA thesis/report to your chair for review, and make revisions as needed.</li> <li>• With the approval of your chair, submit a final draft of your MA thesis/report to your full committee.</li> <li>• Purchase regalia if you intend to walk at graduation (<a href="https://commencement.nmsu.edu/">https://commencement.nmsu.edu/</a>).</li> <li>• Schedule your final exam before the deadline. There are different deadlines for thesis and non-thesis exams, so please check the Graduate School calendar.</li> <li>• Submit the Masters Final Exam Form to the Graduate School 10 business days before your exam.</li> <li>• Hold your final exam.</li> <li>• Submit your MA thesis to Proquest before the deadline. If you completed a MA report, submit the report to your MA committee and the Department Head.</li> <li>• Graduate!</li> </ul>

## More Resources

The department maintains a Graduate Resources webpage that provides links to various useful websites and materials, including a link to the most current Graduate Handbook. That webpage is available here: <https://anthropology.nmsu.edu/graduate-resources.html>. The department website also includes a “Career” page for our undergraduate and graduate students, with links to many relevant job boards. You can find that page here: <https://anthropology.nmsu.edu/careers.html>.

