

UND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES: YOUR QUICK-START GUIDE

Department of Atmospheric Sciences | University of North Dakota



WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome you to the University of North Dakota's Department of Atmospheric Sciences! This guide will help you navigate your transition to graduate school with confidence. Use this checklist to stay organized during your first months and consult the comprehensive Graduate Student Handbook for detailed information on policies, resources, and program requirements.

Upon Receiving Your Admission

- Activate your NDUS and UND email accounts and log in to [Campus Connection](#) to access your student portal
- Review your admission letter thoroughly, noting any provisional requirements or prerequisite coursework you will need to complete

- If you have received an assistantship offer, review the details carefully, including stipend amount, FTE appointment level, and tuition waiver conditions
- International students: Please contact the [UND International Center](#) promptly for guidance on visa documentation and arrival procedures
- Begin exploring housing options in Grand Forks, both on campus and off-campus, to find accommodation that suits your needs

Two to Four Months Before Arrival

- Reach out to your temporary or assigned advisor (often the Graduate Program Director) to introduce yourself, discuss fall course options, and share your research interests
- Confirm your assistantship appointment type—Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), or self-funded—and clarify expectations for your role
- Investigate health insurance coverage options to ensure you will have adequate coverage upon arrival:
 - Domestic students: Explore Affordable Care Act Marketplace plans through [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) and consult with North Dakota Navigators for assistance
 - International students: Review the NDUS student health insurance requirements through the [UND International Center](#)
- Familiarize yourself with the graduate program structure by reviewing the [Graduate School's Guide to Graduation](#), which outlines major milestones such as the Program of Study, candidacy, topic proposal, and defense

One to Two Months Before Arrival

- Submit all required immunization and health documentation through [UND Student Health Services](#)
- Finalize your housing arrangements, whether on-campus or off-campus, and review important considerations such as flood risk zones and utility setup. Connect with [UND Housing Office](#), if needed
- Review parking permit options and costs through [UND Parking Services](#) if you have a vehicle on campus

- If you will be driving in North Dakota, plan to obtain a North Dakota driver's license within your first months on campus, as this is required for establishing residency and qualifying for in-state tuition.
- Assistantship recipients: Gather necessary payroll documents, including a valid form of identification (passport or driver's license), Social Security card (if applicable), and tax information
- Confirm that you can successfully access Blackboard, Campus Connection, and your UND email account
- Familiarize yourself with the UND Code of Student Life and the School of Graduate Studies standards for academic integrity and professional conduct

Your First Day on Campus

- Obtain your University ID card (U Card) from UND One-Stop in Memorial Union 302—you will need this for building access, library services, and campus facilities
- Pick up your office key(s) from Facilities Management after the department submits your key request
- Schedule and attend an in-person meeting with your advisor to confirm your fall course enrollment, discuss initial research expectations, and establish a regular meeting schedule
- Attend departmental orientation sessions and welcome meetings hosted by the Atmospheric Sciences Graduate Student Association (ASGSA) to meet faculty, staff, and fellow students
- Complete required tax forms (federal W-4 and any applicable state forms) with Aerospace Human Resources
- Log into your assigned office computer and request any necessary software or server access through the Aerospace Help Desk
- Acquire required textbooks or obtain electronic access to course materials for your fall semester classes
- Review the Graduate Academic Calendar and add important dates to your personal calendar, including tuition payment deadlines, add/drop periods, and graduation application dates

First-Semester Academic Priorities

- Enroll in ATSC 500 (Introduction to Atmospheric Research, 1 credit)—this course is required for all incoming graduate students and provides essential orientation to research methods
- Enroll in ATSC 505 (Advanced Atmospheric Dynamics, 3 credits)—a required core course that forms the foundation of your graduate coursework
- Enroll in ATSC 570 (Seminar, 1 credit)—this recommended course may be repeated and provides exposure to current research in the field
- In consultation with your advisor, select one to two additional courses from the four curricular categories: Dynamics, Physical, Climate System, and Tools
- Graduate assistants should enroll in a total of 6 to 9 credits for the fall semester to satisfy assistantship requirements and maintain appropriate academic progress
- Begin exploring departmental resources, becoming acquainted with research groups, and identifying potential faculty members for your advisory committee

Important Information for Your Success

Assistantship Expectations:

Graduate assistants with half-time appointments are expected to dedicate an average of 20 hours per week to their assistantship responsibilities, with this average calculated across the entire appointment period, including academic breaks. You should plan for your combined assistantship duties and academic coursework to total approximately 40 hours per week. Students aiming to complete their degree within the typical timeframe (two years for M.S., four years for Ph.D.) should anticipate working additional hours on a regular basis to make satisfactory progress on research and coursework.

Establishing North Dakota Residency

To qualify for in-state tuition beginning in your second year, you must establish legal residency in North Dakota. This requires obtaining a North Dakota driver's license or state-issued identification card within your first months on campus. You must hold this identification for at least 10 calendar months and maintain continuous residence in North Dakota for 12 consecutive months before submitting your residency application through Campus Connection.

Program of Study Requirements:

Your Program of Study (PoS) is a formal academic plan that must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies by the end of your second semester and at least one full semester prior to your anticipated graduation. We strongly encourage you to work closely with your advisor and advisory committee to develop and submit your Program of Study as early as possible in your graduate career.

Preparing for North Dakota Winters:

Grand Forks experiences a continental climate with cold winters—January temperatures average 16°F for daytime highs and -2°F overnight. We recommend investing in essential cold-weather gear, including a well-insulated winter coat, insulated boots, warm gloves, and a hat. If you will have a vehicle, consider installing a block heater and assembling an emergency winter kit. Many students also find that vitamin D supplementation helps mitigate the effects of reduced sunlight during winter months.

Looking Ahead

This checklist provides an overview of essential tasks for your first months at UND. For comprehensive information on program requirements, departmental policies, campus resources, academic milestones, and student life in Grand Forks, please consult the complete Graduate Student Handbook, available from the department office or ASGSA officers.

We encourage you to reach out with questions at any time. Your advisor, the Graduate Program Directors, ASGSA officers, and departmental staff are here to support your success throughout your graduate studies.

Welcome to the UND Atmospheric Sciences community—we look forward to working with you!

Key Contacts

Office	Contact
Graduate Program Director	Dr. Jared Marquis jared.marquis@und.edu 701.777.4707
Department Chair	Dr. Aaron Kennedy aaron.kennedy@und.edu 701.777.5269
Admin Assistants	Wanda Seyler wanda.seyler@und.edu 701.777.3884 (Department/Travel) Shelby Holte shelby.holte@und.edu 701.777.2869 (HR/Payroll/Assistantships)
School of Graduate Studies	Twamley 103 gradschool@und.edu 701.777.2784
One-Stop (Financial Aid, U Card)	Memorial Union 302 onestop@und.edu 701.777.1234
Student Health Services	McCannel 100 701.777.4500
Counseling Center	McCannel 200 701.777.2127
Aerospace Help Desk	aero.UND.edu/help-desk