

What can I do with a degree in Gender Studies?

A Gender Studies MA is an academic degree; that is, it is not a professional degree that prepares you to work in Social Work, Education, or Health Care. However, an understanding of gender and gender-based analysis is increasingly important in our world, and Gender Studies graduates find employment in social services agencies and non-profits, in NGOs and community organizations, in government (local, provincial, and federal), and in private industry.

What is the focus of the UNBC Gender Studies MA program?

At its inception in the 1990s, UNBC's Gender Studies graduate program was the first in Canada, aimed at a broad and rigorous approach to questioning and understanding gender in culture and society.

Our program has an academic and a generalist focus. It accepts openminded, curious students from diverse backgrounds who wish to understand the role of gender in the past, present, and future of humanity, and who wish to use gender as a category of analysis in their research.

Aside from the core courses in feminist theory and feminist methods, you will have remarkable flexibility to define a program of study (in consultation with your supervisor) that meets your academic goals and needs. Your program of study may include coursework from other departments as long as that coursework makes sense in terms of a cohesive program of study. Most students graduate from the Gender Studies MA having completed coursework in at least two other departments.

Whom should I contact with questions?

To start, please read the webpages and these FAQs carefully. We hope you will find answers to most of your questions here!

If you still have questions, please contact Dr. Karin Beeler, Coordinator, Women's and Gender Studies Programs (Karin.Beeler@unbc.ca).

What is the difference between the two streams (thesis and without thesis) in the program?

Our program offers a thesis stream and a without-thesis or coursework stream. Students in the thesis stream complete five courses plus a nine-credit thesis. Students in the without-thesis or coursework stream complete seven courses plus the major paper. Both programs total 24 credit hours.

The thesis is a substantial (100-page) piece of work based on original research or fieldwork. Students must have a supervisory committee to guide their thesis work; before commencing their research, students must complete and defend a thesis proposal.

The thesis itself is defended before the committee and an external examiner who is expert in the field. The thesis does not receive a grade; it is passed or failed.

The major paper is approximately 45 pages long and does not require primary research. The major paper can be a literature review or application of one theory or body of secondary research to a novel field; it can also be an investigation of a novel research question based on the extant secondary literature.

Students in the without-thesis stream do not require a supervisory committee; their work is assessed by the supervisor only and is assigned a letter grade.

Each program has its strengths. Students in the without-thesis stream tend to complete their programs a semester or two ahead of those who complete theses, and have opportunity to take more courses than those in the thesis stream. However, students in the thesis stream receive a more thorough training in research processes and protocols, for example, by going through the Research Ethics Board application process and by completing original (primary) research.

Is the Gender Studies MA offered online?

The GNDR MA is a face-to-face offering. No online degree is offered. The degree is normally offered on the Prince George campus of UNBC.

How do I find a supervisor?

Students are required to identify a potential supervisor before applying. We ask that you consult the list of faculty available [here](#) and name a prospective supervisor in your statement of interest and in your application form.

Note: Because of limited supervisory capacity, students may be admitted to either thesis or coursework programs. Students admitted to the coursework program may apply to transfer into the thesis program based on performance in coursework and the availability of an appropriate supervisor. Students in the thesis program may transfer into the non-thesis program subject to approval of the Women's Studies/Gender Studies Coordinator who will consult with the student's supervisor.

What are the requirements for admission?

The requirements for admission to graduate programs are listed [here](#). In addition, please see the application checklist [here](#). For admission, the GNDR MA program requires a completed bachelor's degree, preferably in Social Sciences or Humanities. While the minimum GPA for admission to UNBC is 3.0, we generally look for GPAs of 3.5 or higher (exceptions may be made in the case of mature-student admission where a candidate has significant professional experience related to gender).

Are GRE scores required for application? No.

Can you review my documents before I apply to let me know whether I am likely to get in?

We receive applications from all over the world, making the assessment of documents and calculation of GPAs a complex matter. GPAs are carefully calculated by UNBC administrative staff with expertise in this area.

At the program level, we assess all candidates for admission in a given semester at once, with all members of the program contributing to the assessment. Therefore, we cannot pre-approve candidates.

Who can serve as a referee?

Academic references are required. Ideally, all of your referees will be holders of academic positions who can speak to your academic qualifications. However, in some cases a professional reference can be added where only one academic reference is available. Try to select professors who know you well enough to comment on your ability to complete a graduate degree.

How long should my Statement of Interest be?

The Statement of Interest should be between 300 and 600 words long. The most effective statements detail the applicant's educational and professional history, academic interests and educational goals, and professional aspirations.

Your Statement of Interest should also detail (1) how you believe UNBC's Gender Studies MA aligns with your goals and (2) the specific coursework and research you hope to undertake whilst completing the program.

Can someone from the program review or proofread my Statement of Interest before I submit it?

The program will not review or proofread Statements of Interest. In fact, we urge you to submit a candid and clear statement that is entirely your own work. This will help us to assess your application.

How do I know if my degree is appropriate for admission?

As an interdisciplinary program, the Gender Studies MA program considers any humanities or social-sciences degree an appropriate preparation for admission. Most of our applicants have first degrees in English, Political Science, Psychology, or other social-sciences and humanities disciplines. However, as part of the admission process, we consider the candidate's preparation in relation to her or his Statement of Interest and proposed program of study. For some students, a natural-sciences or professional degree may be an appropriate first degree depending on the proposed area of study.

My first degree is not in the Arts or Social Sciences. Can I apply? Again, for some students, a degree in the natural, physical, or applied sciences or the health professions may be a very appropriate preparation for a Gender Studies MA. For example, a student interested in studying gender and health

policy may be very well served by an undergraduate degree in Nursing, while a student interested in ecofeminism may be very well prepared by a degree in Biology, Environmental Science, or Ecosystem Science. When you draft your Statement of Interest, however, make sure to articulate how your first degree has prepared you for study in Gender Studies, with particular attention to skills that are translatable to our program.

I am a mature student. Do I qualify for mature student conditional admission?

Conditional admission as a mature student is an exceptional pathway to entry offered to candidates who have weaker academic records but who possess significant professional or volunteer expertise in an area related to gender studies.

Academic regulation 1.4 of the [Graduate Calendar](#) stipulates that “*Five years after completion of a Baccalaureate degree as defined in 1.3.1, applicants whose academic record is such that they would not be admissible to a Master's program may be admitted conditionally as mature students, provided they are recommended by the appropriate Program. Such recommendations must be made in writing by the Program and approved by the Vice Provost Student Recruitment or designate. The minimum grade point average for admission to a Master's program as a conditionally admitted mature student is 2.67 ("B-").*

Note that this regulation does not apply to Master’s degree holders.

I’m from a country where English is the main language of instruction. Do I need to submit proof of English-language proficiency?

Students from certain countries and institutions where English is the language of instruction do not need to submit proof of English-language proficiency. Please check UNBC’s [guidelines](#) and [list of exempted countries and institutions](#).

Will unofficial transcripts suffice for admission evaluation?

Please see the admissions information listed [here](#). Note that: “*For the purpose of the UNBC online application, applicants are welcome to upload unofficial transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended as they can be used for evaluation; however, you need to make arrangements to*

have official transcripts sent directly from the issuing institution to UNBC by the application deadline.”

How much is tuition, and how much will my degree cost?

Tuition for international and domestic graduate students is listed on the tuition and fees website. To calculate your tuition, please consult [this table](#). Please be aware that the tuition charge for our program is covered under “Basic Graduate Tuition.” Note also that the listed tuition charge is *per semester*.

As of 1 September 2021, the minimum charge for a Master’s degree is three semesters’ tuition. Students completing a coursework degree should expect to pay this much *if* (and only if) they complete all requirements within three semesters.

From semesters three to six, students pay full tuition fees. Students who continue past six semesters (for example, some students completing a thesis or research paper) will pay a maintenance fee for the seventh and subsequent semesters of registration. This maintenance fee is approximately 1/3 of the regular tuition fee per semester.

All students also pay additional service fees every semester. These fees are detailed on the [same webpage](#) as the tuition amounts.

Is funding available?

[Funding](#) is available on a competitive basis. The department also offers a small number of teaching assistantships every fall and winter term. These are advertised [online](#) every semester. Students who have been admitted for an upcoming semester should consult this webpage and apply for any appropriate assistantships.

Most of our students fund their own education through a combination of personal savings, scholarships, teaching assistantships, and paid part-time employment. Our faculty also sometimes have research opportunities for skilled graduate students.

I’m an international student. Am I eligible for funding?

International students are eligible for many but not all of UNBC's scholarships. In addition to the scholarships listed [here](#), please review the "graduate awards" listed [here](#). International students are also eligible for teaching assistantships.

How many credits is the Gender Studies MA degree?

The GNDR MA degree is 24 credit hours in duration regardless of the stream chosen.

How long does it take to finish the MA GNDR degree?

The coursework (major paper) degree may be completed in as little as three very busy full-time semesters, though completion in four or five semesters is more common.

A thesis degree may be completed in six or seven semesters, though some students have completed theses within five semesters, and some students find eight semesters more realistic.

The time required for any degree pathway is highly individual and dependent upon the personal circumstances of each student.

Will I study during the summers, or can I work during the summer semesters?

Students are generally able to work part-time during the summer semesters, since few courses are offered.

However, thesis and major-paper students should maintain registration continuously unless on an approved leave and are expected to make progress during the summers. For example, a student in the major-paper (coursework) stream should commence work on the paper during the first summer of the program even if the remainder of the coursework is not complete.

All students should consult with their supervisors concerning summer registration and employment.

Can I transfer graduate credit from another university into my GNDR MA program?

At the graduate level, acceptance of transfer credit is rare and done at the discretion of the department in exceptional cases. While there is a possibility of transferring coursework, the final decision in such cases is only made after your transcripts and application package are received and reviewed. For further information, please see regulation 4.1.6 [here](#).

What is the grade requirement for graduation?

According to UNBC regulations, a student's graduating GPA can be no lower than B- (2.67).