

Graduate Cohort Definitions

Graduate students are assigned to a cohort when they meet official census criteria and are active in a degree-seeking masters or doctorate program. An official census student is one who is enrolled in credit-bearing classes at NAU on the 21st day of the semester and meets tuition payment criteria.

Cohort Semester Assignments

- Students are included in the Fall Cohort if their first semester of attendance at Northern Arizona University is the fall semester or the immediately preceding summer semester.
- Students are included in the Spring Cohort if their first semester of attendance at Northern Arizona University is the spring semester or the immediately preceding winter semester.

Cohort Types

There are three types of Graduate Cohorts:

1. *New Graduate Cohort*
2. *New Degree New Masters or Doctoral Cohort*
3. *New Major (Program-Specific) Cohort*

New Graduate Cohort: Students are placed into the cohort based upon their degree-seeking status, lack of prior graduate-level enrollment at NAU, and the active academic plan on census day. This cohort only tracks retention and graduation rates for the first graduate-level program pursued by a student.

- Degree-seeking Preparation students: These are first-time, degree-seeking master's level students enrolled on census day in a master's level preparation program. If the student changes his/her major or enrolls in a different program, a second cohort will not be established.
- New Masters students: These are first-time, degree-seeking master's level students enrolled on census day in a master's level (non-preparation) program.
- New Doctoral students: These are first-time, degree-seeking doctoral level students enrolled on census day in a doctoral level (non-preparation) program.

New Degree New Masters or Doctoral Cohort: Students are placed into these cohorts based upon their degree-seeking status, prior enrollment, and the active academic plan on census day.

- New Degree New Masters students: These are first-time degree-seeking master's students. The cohort for the student is specific to the masters' level academic plan that was active on census day when the cohort was assigned. If a master's student changes his/her major, he/she will only be reported under the original cohort and plan.
- New Degree New Doctoral students: These are first-time degree-seeking doctoral students. The cohort for the student is specific to the doctoral level academic plan that was active on census day when the cohort was assigned. If a doctoral student changes his/her academic plan or completes the original doctoral program and enrolls in another doctoral program, he/she will only be reported under the original cohort and plan.

- A student who obtains a master's degree and then subsequently enrolls in a doctoral program would be counted in both the new master's cohort (when first enrolled in that master's program) and the new doctoral cohort (when first enrolled in that doctoral program).

New Major (Program-Specific) Cohort: Students are placed into this cohort based upon their first enrollment in a particular graduate-level academic plan (major). This cohort classifies students by the graduate major being sought and provides counts of the number of students who first enrolled in a particular academic plan.

- A student begins a master's level program in Psychology and then changes his/her major to a master's level program in Sociology. This student has two graduate-level cohorts: one for Psychology and one for Sociology.

Retention Rate Reporting

New Graduate Cohort: Retention rate reporting for this cohort looks only at the first graduate-level program pursued by a student at NAU. Students can have one (and only one) *New Graduate Cohort* assigned. Retention is based upon whether the student returned to NAU and enrolled under a graduate-level program after initial placement in the cohort.

New Degree New Masters or Doctoral Cohort: Retention reporting for this cohort looks at whether the student returned to NAU after initial placement in their Master's or Doctoral cohort. A student who first began at NAU as a doctoral student in the Fall of 2019 would be placed into the Fall 2019 Doctoral cohort. Retention is based upon the student's re-enrollment at NAU as a doctoral student after Fall 2019.

New Major Cohort:

- From 1992-2003, retention for the major cohort was based upon a student's primary academic plan (major). A student who began a master's program in Sociology in Fall 2001 was placed in a Sociology Master's cohort for Fall 2001 and retention has been tracked for subsequent years.
- Beginning in 2004, retention is based upon all active academic plans. A student who began two master's programs, one in Sociology and one in Political Science, is assigned to two major cohorts and retention is tracked for both.

Graduation Rate Reporting

New Graduate Cohort: Graduation rate reporting for this cohort looks only at the first graduate-level program pursued by a student at NAU. Students can have one (and only one) *New Graduate Cohort* assigned. Graduation is based upon whether the student completed their original graduate-level program at NAU.

New Degree New Masters (or Doctoral) Cohort: Graduation rate reporting for this cohort looks at whether the student graduated from NAU with the master's (or doctoral) academic plan associated with their established cohort. A student who first began at NAU as a master's student in the Fall of 2019 would be placed into the Fall 2019 master's cohort. Graduation is based upon the student's completion of that master's degree at NAU.

New Major Cohort: Graduation rate reporting for this cohort is based upon the completion of the academic plan associated with the cohort the student was assigned to initially. A student who began in a psychology master's cohort in Fall 2020 is included in the graduation rate calculation upon successful completion of the psychology master's degree.