

# **GSTS Users Manual**

May 30, 2015

Dear Students:

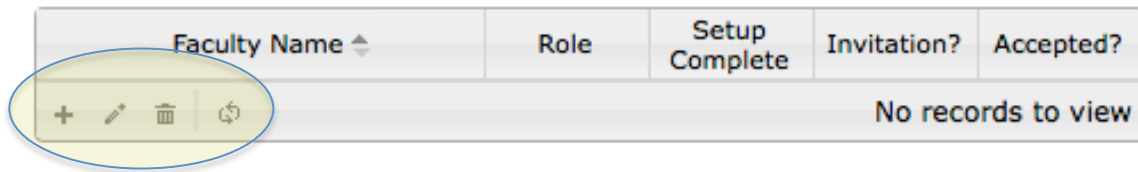
This manual is detail the use of the Graduate Student Tracking System (GSTS). All users of GSTS are responsible for completing his/her tasks in a timely manner. If everyone holds up their responsibilities, the system will become a powerful tool in making sure everyone is on track to be successful. Of course, this will require learning new habits and unlearning old ones. I appreciate everyone's effort to contribute to this system and to make it a success.

David Chopp

## I. Accessing GSTS

To access GSTS, go to the website <https://gsts.northwestern.edu>. You will be prompted for your netid to gain access.

For many lists in this system, the information is editable. There are four symbols that are useful to know. The “+” sign means to add a new entry to the list, the pencil means to edit the selected entry in the list, the trash can means to remove the selected entry in the list, and the circle with arrows is a request to refresh the list after changes have been made. Note: some parts of the system do not always refresh completely, reloading using your browser will also refresh the page.



## II. Tabs in GSTS

There are a total of five tabs at the top of the page in GSTS. We review each of the tabs here.

### A. Committee

The committee tab is where you indicate your principal research advisor(s), your qualifying exam committee, and your thesis committee.

### B. Plan of Study

The plan of study tab is where you propose the courses you plan to take in each quarter. Completed courses are also on this page and must be sorted according to which requirement they are intended to fulfill. **It is your responsibility to maintain this list by sorting the classes into the requirements sections.**

### C. Academic Progress

The academic progress tab is where the annual review process is completed. Each summer, you are required to complete a self-evaluation of your progress toward your degree (PhD students only). An overall rating score is at the top. The rest of the sections are described below. Past year information is stored in the system and can be viewed by clicking on the “Previous years” tab at the bottom of each section.

#### 1. Narrative Statement on Progress

This is a narrative description of work completed in the academic year just completed. The precise expectations for the content of this narrative is between you and your advisor, and will be reviewed by the director of graduate studies annually.

## 2. Research Topic

A brief summary or title of your thesis research topic must be entered here as soon as it is determined. This information will be used to populate your student profile on the department web site. It should be comprehensible by a senior applied math undergraduate.

## 3. Awards

Enter all awards given in the past year.

## 4. Publications

Enter all publications that have appeared in print in the past year. Other publications can be listed such as papers submitted, but not yet published, unpublished manuscripts, etc. The contents of this section is up to you and your advisor(s) to decide.

## 5. Honors

Enter all honors, etc. given during the past year.

## 6. Meetings/Presentations

Enter all professional meetings and conference you attended, and also all poster or oral presentations made at meetings or other locations.

## 7. Teaching

Enter all your teaching responsibilities from the past year. This should include a list of classes for which you served as a teaching assistant or grader. **Please include the instructor(s) who were your direct supervisor for the teaching in the Notes section.**

## 8. Other Courses

Enter all courses or other training activities completed in the past year. **Do not list courses for which you registered and received a grade.** Do list courses that you audited, or other training classes for which you did not receive academic credit.

## 9. Goals for Upcoming Year

Enter your goals for the coming academic year. This is an important section that should be completed in consultation your advisor(s).

## 10. Annual Meeting

Enter the date of the meeting when the information on this page has been or will be reviewed. Make a note of all those present in the discussion. **You must complete this section.**

## 11. Comments

This section can be used to communicate any information that does not appear in the above sections.

### D. Research Project

This tab contains a more substantive abstract of your thesis project. It can be edited as the project evolves, but year-to-year updates are not kept. Whereas the thesis topic in the Academic Progress section is only a title or a short sentence, this section should be more of an abstract that is a paragraph in length. This section should be reviewed at the same time as the annual review during the summer.

### E. Documents

The documents tab is mostly for administrative purposes. It is where many of the documents currently in paper form will be uploaded as we transition from paper to GSTS.

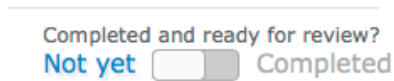
### F. Student Profile and Milestones

Your student profile can be found by clicking on the “Show Profile” tab at the top right of the window. Clicking on that tab reveals summary information about you including your email address, phone number, mailing address, degree path, etc. At the top right of the profile are some buttons to access additional information such as your transcript, financial aid, and milestones. The profile can be closed by clicking on the “Hide Profile” button at the lower right portion of the profile.

Milestones in GSTS are tasks that must be completed within a given time frame as required by the department or by the graduate school. **It is the your responsibility to ensure that all milestones are met on time.** If there is a problem, the issue should be brought to your advisor and then to the Director of Graduate Studies for resolution. To access the milestones, click on the milestones button at the top right. The list shows the milestones to be met, the deadline for the milestone, its status, and any other relevant information. The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for keeping the Milestones up to date and accurate with the help of reporting from students, advisors, and staff.

### III. Detailed Instructions

On most pages, you will see a slider switch as illustrated below:



When you move the slider to “Completed”, you are indicating you have made changes that are ready for review by your advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies. A message is sent to prompt them to review your changes. No changes are official unless this slider is marked completed and the change has been approved upon review, so it is important to use this button when appropriate so that the process moves forward.

**Please note that the button will remain in the “Completed” state until you wish to make changes.** You will be prevented from making any changes until the slider is moved back into the “Not Yet” state. You are free to move the slider from “Completed” to “Not Yet” at any time, no notification is generated going in that direction.

In the following are instructions for each of the tabs.

#### A. Committee

**The committee tab is only for students in the Ph.D. program.** M.S. students do not need to do anything under this tab.

##### 1. Principal Research Advisor

Selection of a thesis advisor is a process that should be conducted in person, of course, but when you have come to an agreement, the information must be entered under the “Principal Research Advisor” section. To add an advisor:

1. Look under the “Principal Research Advisor” heading and move the slider to “yes” to indicate you have an advisor. This will create a new list where you can enter your advisor information.
2. Put the advisor’s last name into the search bar above the list, select the correct name from the search results, select the role (advisor or co-advisor from the drop down list) and then click the “Add” button on the right.
3. Repeat step 2 if you have more than one advisor.
4. Move the slider at the top to “Completed”.

You must have at least one advisor. Any others may be listed as “advisor” or “co-advisor”. Speak with your advisors and they will give you their correct designation.

## 2. Committee

There are two types of committees you will be required to form to complete your degree, the qualifying exam committee and the thesis committee, and they are not created at the same time. Again, you should discuss the participation of faculty members on your committee in person, not through GSTS. When the committee is created, you then add them on GSTS. Once a committee is formed, then proceed as follows:

1. Move the slider under the “Committee” header to “yes” to indicate you have created a committee. If this is for your qualifying exam, this will create a list similar to the research advisor list.
2. Add the faculty on your committee to the list by following the same steps as when you added your principal research advisor. The only difference are the faculty roles:
  - “Qualifying Exam-member” for all qualifying exam participants
  - “Chair” or “Co-Chair” as appropriate for your research advisors on the thesis defense committee.
  - “Final-thesis Member” for members of the thesis defense committee that are not one of your research advisors.
3. Move the slider at the top of the page to “Completed”.

Instructions for adding non-Northwestern Committee Members are given on GSTS website if needed.

### B. Plan of Study

The most frequent tab in GSTS is the Plan of Study section. Before registration each quarter, you must enter your proposed plan of courses to take under the Plan of Study tab. Courses must be entered under the course requirements section for which it’s intended. All other courses should be added to the Electives section. When you are satisfied with your course selections, you will slide the switch at the top to “Completed” and your advisor will be notified to review your choices. You should not complete your class registration until you receive approval.

Note that due to changes in curriculum, the precise course requirements may differ between students entering the program in different years. Unfortunately, GSTS is not able to adapt the requirements according to each individual student, so the requirements listed under the headings may not match each student’s plan. **The final determination of course requirements is according to the student handbook for the academic year you began the program.** This may mean that courses are ultimately listed as electives for some, but required for others. The director of graduate studies will assist in making sure courses are placed in the correct locations when the program of study is approved.

When you are finished, your section “Courses Taken (Unassigned)” list should be empty with one exception. **If you entered before Fall 2014, then all GEN\_ENG 546-0 courses should remain in the unassigned list.**

After a class is completed, the course will move to the “Courses Taken” section and the grade for the course will appear. If a course appears in the “Courses Taken (Unassigned)” list at the top, it should be sorted into the correct requirement list. If you have any questions about where courses should be placed, the director of graduate studies can assist you. Again, if you make any changes like sorting courses on this page, be sure to mark the section as “Completed” at the top so that it can be reviewed.

To enter courses proposed to be taken in a subsequent quarter:

1. Go to the subsection for which a course will be designated as fulfilling a specific requirement. For example, if the course is ES\_APPM 420-1, then it goes under the Asymptotic Methods requirement.
2. Under the “Courses Planned” list enter the course number in the search box at the top. You need not enter the entire number, the search bar will list all matches. For example, it may be helpful to enter “ES\_APPM” in the search bar to get a list of all ESAM department courses. Choose the course you plan to take.
3. After the course is selected, choose the quarter you intend to take the course. You may plan your academic year schedule in one sitting if you so choose, it need not be for the immediately following term.
4. Click the “Add” button.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 until all courses planned are entered.

To sort a course from the “Courses Taken (Unassigned)” to the designated requirements section:

1. Click on the class to be sorted.
2. A drop down menu will appear to the right. Select the requirements section where the class should be listed. The sorting does not take place immediately. To see the changes immediately use the refresh button on the lower left corner of the table to be updated.

Courses cannot be moved directly from one requirement to another, they must first be unassigned and then reassigned following the steps above. To move a course from a requirement list to “Unassigned”:

1. Select the course to be unassigned.
2. Click on the Trash icon at the bottom left of the table. Note that this does not remove the class entirely, it just removes it from the requirement section. Upon refresh, it will appear in the “Unassigned” section at the top.
3. Follow the steps above to move the course from “Unassigned” to the new requirements section.

### C. Academic Progress

This section is only required for students in the Ph.D. program. Before the end of each academic year, every student must submit an annual progress report, approved by his/her advisor, to the Director of Graduate Studies. To submit a progress report, follow these steps:

1. Check to make sure that you are working under the correct academic year (should be the most recent, but double check) by checking the tab heading.
2. Give yourself a numerical rating under the Self-Evaluation label at the top using the drop down menu.
3. Complete the Narrative Statement on Progress section.
4. Give a brief description of your research topic, it may or may not be the same as in previous years.
5. Add any Awards, Publications, Honors, Meetings Attended in the subsequent sections. Press the "+" button to add one of these items, and then complete the requested information.
6. If you were a TA during the past year, add the course in the same way that courses are added in the "Plan of Study" tab. Search for the course, select the quarter in which you served as a TA, and then click the "Add" button.
7. Provide a bulleted list of your goals for the coming year in the "Goals" section.
8. Enter the planned date for meeting with your advisor(s) and who should attend in the "Annual Meeting" section.
9. Meet with your advisor(s) at the indicated time to discuss all the sections under this tab. Make any edits as is needed in consultation with your advisor(s).
10. Mark the section as "Completed".

### D. Research Project

The research project narrative may be updated at any time. It is recommended that it be reviewed for accuracy after each review of your academic progress. After each change, mark the section as "Completed" so that it can be reviewed.

### E. Milestones

You should keep an eye on all milestones to make sure you are on track. These are either Graduate School or Department requirements that must be completed before a degree can be awarded. Many of these milestones have deadlines that must be met to remain in good standing. If you believe you have fulfilled a milestone and it is not marked as Completed or Waived, contact your advisor.



## **IV. Timeline of Tasks**

### **A. Spring Qtr of 1<sup>st</sup> year**

- Add your Principal Research Advisor information under the Committee tab.

### **B. Spring Qtr of 2<sup>nd</sup> year**

- Add your qualifying exam committee under the Committee tab.

### **C. Middle of each Qtr**

- Enter the courses planned for the coming quarter in the boxes according to which requirement it is intended to fulfill.
- Check your milestones to make sure you are on track.

### **D. Before end of each Summer Qtr**

- Complete the Academic Progress section for the current academic year.
- Review and update the description of your research project under the “Research Project” tab.