

APPLYING FOR GRADUATE STUDIES IN THE NRES DEGREES.

If you are interested in pursuing a graduate degree in UNBC's NRES programs, the next stage in the process is beginning an application. The following is advice from the NRES Graduate Committee to prospective students who would like to move to this step.

1. Identify the degree that you are interested in, and then look through the list of faculty that accept students in that degree (<http://www.unbc.ca/nres/faculty.html>). The biggest limitation to getting accepted into the NRES graduate program - presuming you meet all the entrance requirements - is whether a faculty member identifies that they agree to supervise your research. Contacting potential supervisors before you apply will facilitate this introduction and increases the chances of your finding a supervisor.
2. In your email to the faculty member, indicate your background and the particular interest you have in the degree. It helps if you indicate that you understand that person's research and it matches your own. Generic emails to faculty, when your background and interests clearly do not match the field they are working in, are unlikely to elicit a response. If you take the time to look into a supervisor's background, including taking time to look up their papers etc, you will narrow your search to supervisors that you truly are interested in working with, and likely who will be interested in working with you.
3. When you begin contacting supervisors, don't be surprised if they respond by wanting a Curriculum Vitae (academic resume that highlights your educational and professional background) and copies of unofficial transcripts. The former gives supervisors some idea of your background relative to their own, and the latter can give prospective supervisors some ideas for funding strategies via scholarships etc. Not all prospective supervisors will want to see these, but some will. It is a good idea to have these updated and on hand in case they are requested.
4. If the supervisor expresses interest, they will typically outline what projects they are currently working on, and what they have funding for or could feasibly pursue for funding. You may have to be flexible enough in projects to adjust to what the supervisor is likely to be able to support, but you also need to make sure that the project they have available is going to be of true interest to you - once you start, the project will become yours and you need to have the motivation to pursue it.
5. Prospective supervisors might want to check your references before you formally apply to the program. Make sure you have these lined up and these people know what you have been working on recently, especially if you have been out of your formal education for a while. You can, and should, also ask the prospective supervisor if they mind you contacting some of their current or former students to get an idea of what it is like working at UNBC. Treat this stage as a mutual interview - this person will be your primary mentor for the next few years, so invest the time in making sure you will have a good working relationship.
6. If at this stage both of you are still interested in pursuing an application, then the supervisor can help guide you through the application process.

For any additional information, please contact the NRES Graduate Program at nresgradinfo@unbc.ca.