

No matter whether you finished your degree 20 years ago, or just a few weeks ago, graduate education is a big shift from your undergraduate studies. We want you to be prepared for these changes, so you can do your very best! If we admitted you, we believe you have the ability to be successful, but you do need to commit yourself to a new style of learning.

Class format: One of the biggest changes is that all of our courses are conducted in an online format. Different instructors use different methods to deliver this information. Take the time to go through the D2L orientation – it will greatly benefit you.

Grading: To earn your M.S., you must maintain a 3.0 cumulative gpa, and you cannot have more than three C grades on your transcript. It is really important that you complete all assignments to avoid a C or lower. When your GPA falls below a 3.0, you will be placed on academic warning, and have one semester to pull your GPA up, and avoid academic dismissal. If you are struggling with a class, it is vital that you reach out to your professor and the graduate coordinator for help.

Paper expectations: You will be asked to complete a major research project in most of your classes. Compared to undergraduate courses, a much larger portion of your grade will likely be determined by a final paper. We expect that you will proofread and revise your writing. These papers are typically longer at the graduate level, with higher expectations.

On being challenged: You will be challenged by your professors and held to a much higher standard than you ever were at the undergraduate level. This process will result in a dramatic improvement in your critical thinking, research, and writing skills, but it can be painful at the onset. Such challenges can be frustrating; yet the expectation is significantly different from your undergraduate experience.

Reading expectations: You will be reading more than you ever have before. Reading and writing assignments, especially in the first months of graduate school, are often overwhelming. This is a normal feeling, and you will become a better reader and writer the more you work at it.

Graduate school is different in how you assess readings. The focus now moves much more to “how” the research is done, along with what the research adds to scholarship on the subject. We focus more on methods, data, and theoretical/conceptual approaches to studying a subject, versus simply retaining material.

Engagement: Students should join the Department of Public Health and Nutrition at EIU Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/EIUPublicHealth>, to help them connect with faculty, alumni, and fellow students. Students should also check their EIU email regularly. And log on to the D2L page for Health Promotion. You are also encouraged to join the Graduate Student Advisory Council (<https://www.eiu.edu/eiugsac/>). Remaining engaged enhances your learning experience, connects you with mentors, and helps you build a network of support.