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DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND GRADUATE SCHOOL
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AFFECTING GRADUATE STUDENTS
MASTERS DEGREES

A. Classification of Graduate Students

Students are admitted to the department's graduate program under the following categories:

1. Prospective candidate for the M.A. degree status is granted to students who meet all admission requirements for the M.A. degree;

2. Prospective candidate for the M.S. degree status is granted to students who meet all admission requirements for the M.S. degree;

3. Prospective candidate for the Ph.D. degree status is granted to students who meet all admission requirements for the Ph.D. degree;

4. Unclassified Postgraduate (UPG) status may be granted to students who have some condition of admission placed on them by the department or the Graduate School. Unclassified Postgraduate students may later be admitted to full graduate standing as a degree student, and work taken as an unclassified student may be included as part of a graduate degree program;

5. Non-degree candidate status may be granted to students who meet all requirements for admission to the Graduate School but wish to take courses without being a candidate for a degree.

B. Admission Procedure

The (verbal and quantitative) general test of the Graduate Record Examination is required of all degree candidates. Students who did not take the exam as part of their entrance to the Graduate School are urged to complete this test as soon as possible. Additionally, students who have already taken the exam but feel that they can significantly improve their score are encouraged to take the exam again, since the GRE score is an important factor in the competition for all university-wide assistantships and fellowships. Transcripts from all universities attended are required as well as three letters of reference. Appropriate forms are available from the graduate coordinator. Additional information for foreign students is also available from the graduate coordinator. Based on the above information the Graduate Studies Committee makes admission recommendations to the Graduate School. The final and official admission decision is made by the Graduate School.

C. M.A./M.S. Degree Requirements

Both the M.A. and M.S. program will require a minimum of 31 credit hours exclusive of deficiencies, if any. All students are expected to have a minimum undergraduate background equivalent to each of the following courses:

- GEOG 1101 Introduction to Human Geography
- GEOG 1112 Introductory Weather and Climate
- GEOG 1113 Introduction to Landforms
- GEOG 3510 Cartography and Graphics
- GEOG 3620 Introduction to Economic Geography
- STAT 2000 Elementary Statistics
A beginning graduate student, who, during advisement, is judged deficient in the fundamentals of geography may demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency by taking the appropriate course for undergraduate credit, or by attaining satisfactory scores on the final examination of the appropriate undergraduate course. A satisfactory score, in this case, shall be a "B" or better.

Specific M.A./M.S. degree requirements stipulate that:

a. The Program of Study must include the following core courses:
   1. GEOG 8900 and 8901 (8901 only for those starting in Fall 2008 or later) Proseminars (1 hr. each)
   2. GEOG 6300 Introductory Spatial Analysis (3 hrs.)
   3. GEOG 7000 Master's Research (3 hrs. only)
   4. GEOG 7300 Master's Thesis (3 hrs. only)

b. The Program of Study must include a minimum of 18 additional elective credit hours, subject to the following conditions:
   1. Minimum of 12 of the 18 elective hours must be taken at the 8000 level.
   2. GEOG 7000, 7005, and 7300 cannot be used as part of the 18 elective hours; also note that no more than 3 hrs. of GEOG 7000 and 3 hrs. of GEOG 7300 should appear on the Program of Study.
   3. Up to 9 of the 18 elective hours may be taken outside of geography.
   4. No more than 3 of the 18 elective hours may be from Directed Problems courses from Geography (GEOG 8290, 8390, 8590, 8690) or from any other departments.
   5. Courses taken to fulfill deficiencies may not be included in the 18 elective hours.
   6. GEOG 6920 (Special Problems in Area Analysis) and GEOG 6921 (Directed Topics in Independent Research) cannot appear on the Program of Study.

c. A written thesis proposal that outlines the research focus of the thesis shall be submitted to the student's Advisory Committee for their comment and approval ideally by the second semester and no later than the third semester in residence (exclusive of summer).

d. A thesis that shows independent judgment in developing and resolving a research problem must be written and approved by the student's Advisory Committee.

e. All requirements for the M.A./M.S. degree must be completed within six years, beginning from the date of first course registration.

f. Final oral M.A./M.S. examinations will not be conducted during the summer break (from May 15th - August 15th) except by prior mutual consent of the student and the committee members.

g. The minimum residence requirement is one academic year of two semesters of full-time study.

Specific Conditions for the M.S. Degree

In addition, for the M.S. degree, an emphasis on work in the sciences and/or including geographic techniques is expected. Specific requirements governing which degree will be awarded involve the thesis area and supporting course work. However, a student whose course work includes a minimum of 18 semester hours in physical geography and/or techniques courses is eligible for the MS degree regardless of thesis topic. See the University course catalog for list of specific courses in Human Geography, Physical Geography, and Geographic Techniques.
D. Course Exemptions

Graduate level courses may be exempted, provided that the instructor of the course being exempted certifies as to the student's proficiency. Certificate forms are available from the Geography Degree Program Assistant. Only certain courses can be exempted.

E. Grades

The minimum grade for credit is "C". Although not specifically stated in the graduate catalog, the Department also considers "C" as the minimum level for non-graduate credit courses. If a student repeats a course, the last grade earned is used in calculating the graduate average.

A grade of "I" is given for course work not completed within the semester in which the student registered for the course. This grade indicates that, although the student was doing satisfactory work, the student was unable to complete the course for some reason beyond his/her control. The Department recognizes that at the graduate level a student occasionally may not be able to complete the course work within a given semester, but considers repeated grades of "I" as inadequate progress. According to the Graduate School requirements, a student must remove an "I" grade within 3 semesters (including summer semester) of enrollment following assignment of the "I" grade or it automatically becomes an "F".

Grades of "S" (Satisfactory) and "U" ( Unsatisfactory) are given to some graduate level courses. These grades must be given to all 7000 (Master Research) and 7300 (Master Thesis) registrants. Failure to maintain an overall "B" (3.0) average can result in dismissal from the degree program. Graduate School policy is that a student with a cumulative graduate grade point average below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters is placed on academic probation. The student then must make a 3.0 or better semester average each succeeding semester that the student's overall cumulative average is below 3.0. Probation ends when the cumulative average is 3.0 or above. A student is dismissed if a 3.0 semester average is not maintained while on probation. Departmental policy is that if the student's grade average for any semester falls below a "B", the student is placed on probation for the succeeding semester. During the probationary period, students who do not maintain "B" level work are assigned to the end of the list of students holding assistantships and are subject to loss of previously offered financial support.

F. Course Loads

A full-time course load is considered to be nine to fifteen credit hours per semester during the academic year and six to twelve credit hours during the summer semester. To exceed 18 hours per semester, a student must have the approval of the Department and the Graduate Dean.

Students on one-third time assistantship support cannot carry more than eighteen credit hours per semester without approval by the Department and the Graduate Dean. Approval forms for exceeding eighteen hours are available from the Geography Degree Program Assistant, and must be signed by the Graduate Coordinator or Major Professor.

Any M.A./M.S. student who is using university facilities or staff time is required to register for at least three credit hours of course work, and a student shall enroll in GEOG 7000 or 7300 during every semester he/she is in residence and not taking other courses. Students holding an assistantship must register for a minimum of twelve credit hours each semester the appointment is held.

Students registering for summer session who take advantage of the $25 reduced tuition as a result of being on an assistantship must register for a minimum of nine hours of graduate credit.
G. Advisement

All graduate students are initially assigned to the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Studies Committee for advising and can remain with the Committee for no more than two semesters. As soon as the student has determined what aspect of Geography he/she wishes to investigate for his/her thesis, he/she is directed to the professor(s) whose interests are most closely related to that branch of geography. Provided the professor is willing to accept the student, he/she becomes the student's major professor. Major professors must be regular or provisional members of the Graduate Faculty.

For the M.A./M.S. program, an advisory committee consisting of the Major Professor and two additional faculty members is established. A majority must be regular or provisional members of the Graduate Faculty, and a majority must be from the Geography Department.

The prospective M.A./M.S. degree candidate and his/her advisory committee develop a Program of Study, in conformance with the interests of the student and the requirements of the degree. Normally, the Program of Study is developed during the student's first semester after selection of the Major Professor and advisory committee. The Program must constitute a logical whole and be approved by the student's advisory committee, Graduate Coordinator, and the Graduate School Dean. Only graduate level courses (6000 and above) can be listed in the Program of Study. No course with a grade below "C" can be used in the Program of Study. Any change in the Program of Study subsequent to the initial approval must meet with signature approval of all Advisory Committee members. Forms for the approval of the Program of Study are available from the Geography Degree Program Assistant.

H. Evaluation of In-Residence Graduate Students

Each semester the faculty reviews the progress of all graduate students. This review considers the student's academic performance and work as an assistant, if applicable. Considerations normally examined include present and past levels of performance, promise of future intellectual growth, and factors relating to the student's potential, such as perceptiveness; imagination; ingenuity in conceptualization; design; and accomplishment of research; and power to reason logically.

Each Major Professor is charged with communicating with the student the salient aspects of the faculty review of the student following each review.

I. Admission to Candidacy (in the Department)

Prospective candidates for the M.A./M.S. degree are admitted to candidacy when:

1. All prerequisites for admission to the departmental graduate program have been satisfactorily completed;

2. The student's Program of Study has been approved by the Major Professor, Advisory Committee, Graduate Coordinator, and the Graduate School Dean;

3. An average of 3.0 or higher has been maintained on all graduate courses taken;

4. A thesis proposal has been presented and approved by the Major Professor and Advisory Committee. A Departmental Thesis Approval Form should be obtained from the Department Degree Program Assistant before the thesis presentation.
J. **Thesis Copy for Reading Committee**

The custom of the Department is not to require the thesis to be put in final, "clean" form for Reading Committee evaluation. Rather, a draft submitted must be complete (including a table of contents and a list of figures and tables), in the proper format, and easily readable. All maps, charts, and tables should be in final form. Once approved, the final copy is word processed and submitted to the Graduate School.

K. **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance in the form of assistantships or scholarships is available from a number of sources. Most graduate students in the Department who receive financial assistance through the University of Georgia are on a Departmental assistantship or a Graduate School assistantship. Students on an assistantship must take a minimum of 12 hours per semester.

Application for assistantship can be made at [http://www.ggy.uga.edu/academics/graduate/assistantship.html](http://www.ggy.uga.edu/academics/graduate/assistantship.html)

1. **Departmental Assistantships**

   Each year approximately thirty Departmental assistantships are awarded for the academic year. A small number of assistantships are available during the summer session.

   a. The assistantship is normally for one-third time work commitment (thirteen hours per week).
   b. In addition to the actual monies received by the assistant, one pays a reduced tuition of just $25 per semester and the required student activity fee.
   c. A student holding an academic year assistantship may register in the following Summer Semester and pay only the reduced tuition of $25.00, plus student activity fee.
   d. Duties of a Departmental assistant normally include one or more of the following:
      1. Lab/discussion instructor for GEOG 1101, 1103, 1112, 1113, 1125, 2010, 2110, 2130, 2250, 3510, 4330/6330 or 4370/6370 courses; usually these instructors are those who hold the Bachelor degree or are new students with the Master degree;
      2. Teacher of an independent section of 1101, 1111, 1112, or 1113. To teach an independent class, the instructor must have the Master degree.
      3. Assignment to one or more members of the faculty as a teaching or a research assistant.
   e. An assistantship can be canceled at the close of any semester if the assistant's service or academic performance becomes unsatisfactory (see Sections E and H).
   f. A graduate student whose native tongue is not English must take the SPEAK Test given by the Office of Instructional Development and complete successfully GRSC 7770 at the earliest opportunity to prepare for his/her departmental assistantship duties. Failure to do so may result in the cancellation of the departmental assistantship. Students whose first language is not English must achieve a SPEAK Test score of 26 or better before engaging in an instructional role with students, according to policies of the University of Georgia.

2. **Graduate School Assistantships**

   Assistantships are selected in University-wide competition. The department determines which of its new students it will nominate for this award. A student may not directly apply for this award. An important element in the selection process is the GRE score (see Section B), previous grade point averages, letters of recommendation, and other supporting documentation. The number of assistantships won by Departmental graduate students varies yearly.

   a. The assistantship is normally for a 40% time work commitment (sixteen hours a week) and is usually awarded for 21 months.
   b. In addition to actual monies received by the assistant, one pays a reduced tuition of just $25 per semester and the required student activity fee.
c. A student holding an academic year assistantship may register in the following Summer Semester and pay only the reduced tuition of $25.00, plus student activity fee.
d. Duties of Graduate School assistants normally include:
   (1) Graduate Research Assistantship: assignment to a member of the faculty as a research assistant;
   (2) Graduate Non-Teaching Assistantship: assignment as research assistant as well as assistant in laboratories, grading papers, and other similar work.
e. Holders of Graduate School Assistantships have a work commitment, and the holder should not consider the assistantship as a financial scholarship in which he/she pursues only dissertation research.

3. Other possible sources of financial support include research assistantships funded by faculty research contracts, and others noted in the Graduate School catalog or announced annually by means of circulars to the Department. For further information see the Graduate Coordinator.

4. Merit supplements are available on a competitive basis for the most outstanding holders of departmental or Graduate School assistantships.

L. Selection and Continuation of Assistantships

Students who apply for financial assistance at the time of their first admission to the Department's graduate program are evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee for admission and assistantships. Students whom the Committee considers suitable for appointment as assistants are recommended to the Head. A student who is in residence and applies for an assistantship for subsequent years is evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee, whose recommendation is presented to the faculty for acceptance or rejection. With good academic and assistantship duty performance, aid is normally available for subsequent years of study according to the following guidelines.

The Department normally expects students on one-third time assistantship appointments to complete their M.A./M.S. degree requirements in two years. Therefore, students are eligible for up to two years (4 semesters excluding summers) of assistantship support during their first two years of residence. Exceptions to these guidelines may be considered on an individual basis.

The Graduate Studies Committee selects those students it considers most qualified for Graduate School Awards and, in consultation with those students, prepares and submits their applications to enter the competition.

M. Change in Degree Objective

A student, upon completing an M.A./M.S. degree and wishing to continue for the Ph.D. degree must petition the Department for approval by writing a letter to the Graduate Coordinator requesting the change. The Coordinator will then present the request to the faculty for acceptance or rejection. If accepted, the Coordinator will recommend the appropriate change of degree objective to the Graduate School Dean.

Departmental policy is that no student working toward an M.A./M.S. degree is permitted to take courses toward the Ph.D. degree until he/she has completed all requirements for the M.A./M.S. Students should not assume that they will be permitted to pursue a degree other than that in which they are presently registered unless they have formal faculty and Graduate School approval.
N. Grievances

1. The purpose of a grievance program is to provide a prompt and fair resolution of complaint when the normal student-teacher or other professional relationship fails.

2. Graduate students who are unable to resolve their complaint should first consult with the Departmental Graduate Coordinator. The Coordinator will attempt to mediate the problem on an informal basis.

3. If the Graduate Coordinator is unsuccessful, the student may appeal to the Department Head. The Head may also attempt to resolve the problem on an informal basis.

4. Failing resolution, the Department Head will refer the grievance to the elected departmental Advisory Committee for a formal hearing. Should any member of the committee be a party to the grievance in question the Head shall then replace that committee member with another member of the faculty.

The Advisory Committee shall request that the student provide the committee a written statement detailing the nature of and circumstances surrounding the grievance. If the grievance pertains to the actions of a single faculty member (grades, assignment, etc.) the committee will inform the faculty member that a grievance has been filed and of the nature of the grievance. Should the grievance be directed against a faculty committee the chair of said committee shall then be asked to represent in similar fashion that committee. The faculty member or committee chair may then submit a written response or position statement to the committee. After reviewing the written statements of each party the Advisory Committee may request a meeting with each. Nevertheless, should either party declare a desire to meet with the committee, both parties shall be asked to do so.

After hearing all pertinent input from each party the Advisory Committee will deliberate and report its findings and recommendation to both parties in writing.

5. All grievances must be acted upon as expeditiously as possible.

O. Summary of Procedural Steps Toward the M.A./M.S. Degree

See the Graduate School website http://www.grad.uga.edu for a listing of all deadlines that apply to the following steps.

1. Secure admission to status as prospective degree candidate for the M.A./M.S. degree (See Section A and B).

2. Obtain advisement from the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Studies Committee until a Major Professor is selected.

3. Formulate a Program of Study with the Major Professor and Advisory Committee (see Section G).

4. Complete all required course work (see Section C).

5. Present a thesis proposal to be approved by the Major Professor and Advisory Committee (Use Department Thesis Approval Form) (See Section I).

6. Complete thesis under supervision of the Major Professor (See also Instructions for Preparing the Thesis and Dissertation available from the Graduate School and the Geography Degree Program Assistant).
7. The Department has designated the latest edition of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), as the appropriate style manual. In addition, it has become common for at least one manuscript suitable for submission to refereed professional journals to constitute the body of the thesis. Graduate students encountering problems associated with the timely return of their thesis materials (2 to 8 weeks depending on circumstances) from either the major professor or Reading Committee (#9 below) should report their concern to the Graduate Coordinator, who, in consultation with the Head, will inquire into the nature of the delay.

8. The thesis, approved by the Major Professor, is submitted to the Advisory Committee which acts as a reading committee and represents the Graduate Faculty in determining the acceptability of the thesis. A majority of the three-member Advisory Committee and the Chairperson of the Reading Committee must be regular or provisional members of the Graduate Faculty. The responsibilities of the Reading Committee Chairperson are:

   (1) to coordinate the reading and evaluation of the thesis or dissertation after it has been submitted to the Reading Committee by the Major Professor;

   (2) to communicate the salient points of the Reading Committee's evaluation of the thesis or dissertation to the Major Professor, and

   (3) to verify that the recommendations of the Reading Committee made during the review process and the final oral exam are incorporated into the final copy of the thesis or dissertation by signing the cover page of the final copy immediately below the signature of the Major Professor.

9. Final Oral Examination covering student's course work and thesis is conducted by the Major Professor and Reading Committee. Although actual conduct of this examination rests with the Examining Committee, the general policy of the Department is that:

   a. the examination should last approximately two to two and one-half hours; and

   b. the examination will start with a fifteen minute discourse by the student on a topic assigned by the Major Professor. Assignment of the topic will be made two or three days prior to the examination.

10. One complete formatted copy of the thesis must be electronically submitted to the Graduate School no later than four weeks prior to graduation for a format check. All requirements for the thesis must be completed no later than one full week prior to graduation.

11. One corrected copy of the thesis must be electronically submitted to the Graduate School together with the Final Defense Approval form no later than two weeks prior to graduation. For details and guidelines on how to submit electronically the thesis, please consult the Graduate School website at: [http://www.grad.uga.edu](http://www.grad.uga.edu) and click on the button "Theses/Dissertations" under the "Academics" category. This official copy of the thesis will be electronically submitted by the Graduate School to the main library for archiving.

12. All requirements for the degree must be completed and reported to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to graduation.

13. An application for graduation must be filed with the Graduate School no later than Friday of the second full week (first full week in summer) of classes in the graduation semester. Because of the short length of time between this date and graduation day, no exceptions will be made by the Graduate School. Formal graduation exercises are held in May, August, and December.
Students must be registered at the University of Georgia for a minimum of three credit hours the semester in which they complete all degree requirements.