



Graduate Student Handbook

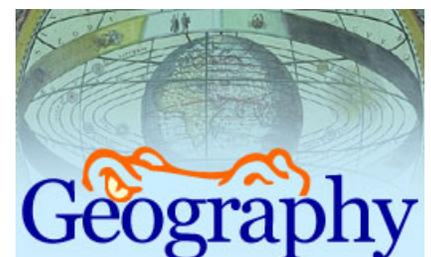
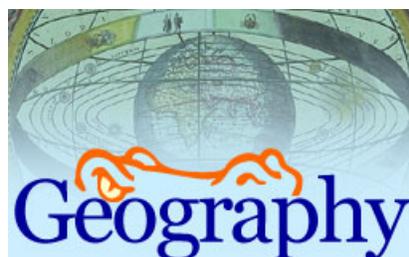
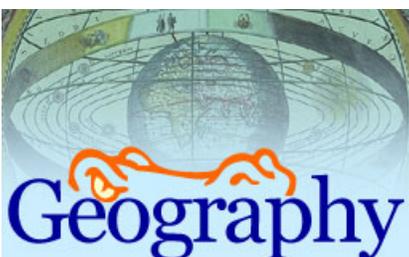
Department of Geography, University of Florida

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Dr. Michael Binford, Chair
Dr. Corene Matyas, Graduate Coordinator
Ms. Desiree Price, Graduate Secretary

3141 Turlington Hall P.O. Box 117315
Gainesville FL 32611-7315
Phone: (352) 392-0494 Fax: (352) 392-8855

Website: www.geog.ufl.edu



This "Brief Guide" specifies the Geography Department's internal requirements, standards, and procedures for obtaining an advanced degree. When helpful, it also reviews the general requirements of the Graduate School. Please keep in mind that when you apply for graduation, the Department certifies that you have met our required coursework and followed our internal procedures. The Graduate School verifies committee memberships, minor and special minor coursework, and other regulations that they impose. You must satisfy both the Department and Graduate School regulations before your degree can be completed. This Handbook is designed to help students avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary delays. However, it does not address or replace all the rules, regulations, and instructions contained in the online catalogs and handbooks of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School. Emails from the Department, Graduate School, and UF will only be sent to your Gatorlink account – please monitor it regularly.

For more complete information see: <http://gradschool.rgp.ufl.edu/>

Selecting your Committee Chair and Forming the Committee

During your first semester, your initial contact faculty member and the Graduate Coordinator can be consulted when selecting a program of courses and research. During Semester 1, students should make appointments to meet with faculty that share similar research interests and select a Committee Chair. This professor must have Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) in the Department of Geography. The Chair must approve all aspects of the graduate student's program (e.g., Supervisory Committee members, courses, timeline for completion of requirements). You should communicate your progress to your advisor regularly and should meet with them once per semester at a minimum.

During Semesters 1 and 2, students should meet with additional potential committee members. Specific rules governing the formation of the committee are set by the Graduate School and Geography cannot be in the minority on any committee. Masters-level committees must have three members and 2 are from Geography. For Ph.D. students, committees must consist of at least 4 members, and one member must be declared as the external member – this faculty cannot hold a joint affiliation with Geography and their job is to represent the Graduate School in all committee meetings. If a minor is selected, a faculty member outside of Geography must also represent this minor; this person can double as the minor representative and external member. It is possible to have more committee members than the minimum of four. It is Geography's policy that an affiliate faculty member cannot serve as a committee chair, and no more than one affiliate faculty can serve on a committee. Committees must be submitted to the Graduate School - forms are to be filed with the Department's Graduate Secretary, who then enters the information into GIMS. Please check GIMS to verify that your committee information is correct. The Supervisory Committee will be responsible for all subsequent advisement received by the graduate student, **including coursework**. Please establish your committee by the end of your first year in the program as required by the graduate school. Present a program of study containing intended coursework at your initial committee meeting (usually held at the end of year 1 or start of year 2) for approval.

Annual activities reports are due each fall semester save your first semester enrolled. This report must be reviewed and signed by your advisor. **Remember that faculty are only paid Aug 15 – May 15 and are not available for summer defenses.** Plan accordingly.



Master of Arts and Master of Science Requirements

We expect master's students to finish their program in 2-3 years. The completion of the degree requires a minimum of 30 hours of coursework, the production of a thesis, a presentation of the research as a departmental Colloquium session, and a public defense of the thesis. Plan carefully so that all requirements are met. After 7 years, coursework becomes invalid and must be repeated.

The Master's Thesis should be of publishable quality, demonstrating the student's ability to perform original empirical or theoretical research. It can follow a research paper format with an additional introduction and conclusions chapter for three total chapters, or a more traditional thesis, and should be prepared according to the requirements of the Graduate School. Your Chair and Committee provide feedback and comments prior to the production of a final version of the thesis and the scheduling of its defense. The graduate school has strict guidelines for the formatting of the document and it is the responsibility of the student, not the committee, to ensure that these guidelines are met. In the semester you plan to graduate, pay close attention to ALL deadlines published by the Graduate School. Masters theses must be presented for "first submission" by the published deadline. The thesis must be defended successfully before it can be submitted. Plan ahead!

When planning the timeline towards the defense, work backwards from the target date to be sure you have enough time to accomplish all tasks. The Chair must notify the department, via email, of the proposed oral defense date no later than **10 business days** (Spring Break included) prior to the scheduled date. The email should include the document title, names of committee members, and location and date of the oral presentation. Also, no later than **10 business days prior** to the scheduled defense, the student must place a copy of their document for public inspection in TUR3141. This document must be properly formatted with all tables, figures, front matter, abstract, etc. Prior to setting a defense date, be sure to allow adequate time for all committee members to read your document and provide feedback – two weeks minimum is a good rule of thumb. Your advisor will have provided feedback on prior drafts of the document before you circulate it to the rest of the committee. Make all edits and get form signed by all committee members stating you are cleared to set a defense date. Do this before you approach Desiree to schedule a room for defense. Students are responsible for observing all published deadlines in order to graduate in a given semester. Students must be registered for 3 credits of GEO6791 in the semester they graduate (fall or spring).



Master's Program Course Requirements

Cred.	Course	Notes
2	GEO5920 Colloquium	Must attend for 2 semesters – it is best to do this in first year; can register in later semesters; must present thesis research before graduating
3	GEO6118 Contemporary Geographic Thought	
3	GEO6160 Intro Quantitative Methods Geography	Take first fall semester if possible. If taken previously, take GEO6161 Intermediate Quant first spring semester. If taken both, this requirement is met. Get waiver from instructor if taken elsewhere.
3 or 4	Techniques Requirement (in addition to coursework from previous degree) Take one of the following courses:	GEO5945 Field Methods in Geography GEO6938 Advanced Remote Sensing GEO6938 Appl. GIS for disease ecol. & epidemiology GEO6938 GIS Programming GIS5028C Advanced Air Photo Interpretation GIS5038C Remote Sensing GIS5107C Geog Info Sys Research GIS6104 Spatial Networks MET6752 Atmospheric Data Analysis
3	GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	Take at least 1 additional course in geography that does not double another requirement
3	<u>NOT</u> GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	Take 3 hours outside of the department
3 or 6	GEO6971 Thesis Hours	Must take 3 credits in semester graduating (fall or spring), maximum of 6 hours count towards 30 hours for degree

30 hours are needed for the degree.

- Note:
- a) only 12 hours of GEO6905 can count towards degree
 - b) an officially declared minor is not required
 - c) GEO6938 is a generic number – this number will change once the instructor has applied for and received a “real” course number and it is added to the catalog
 - d) Be sure ALL GEO6938 Special Topics courses have actual titles
 - e) For a list of all “on the books” courses offered by our department, see <http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=833>

Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

We encourage doctoral students to finish their program in 4-5 years. We often prioritize students for funding according to their progress towards the degree. Failure to graduate within 5 years of advancing to candidacy means that you will have to retake comprehensive exams and/or pass another proposal defense. Coursework that is more than 7 years old cannot be counted towards the degree. The components that comprise the Ph.D. degree include 90 hours of coursework, oral and written comprehensive examinations, an oral defense of the dissertation research proposal, a presentation of the research at a departmental colloquium after ABD status has been attained, the production of a dissertation, and the public oral defense of the dissertation.

Steps Towards Candidacy

During years 1 and 2 in the Ph.D. program, most coursework is completed. Then, students work towards becoming Ph.D. Candidates. Candidacy (ABD status) is attained after the following have been achieved:

1. The satisfactory completion of written and oral Qualifying or Comprehensive Exams.
2. The satisfactory preparation and oral defense of a dissertation research proposal.
3. The satisfactory completion of all Ph.D. course requirements (save for research hours GEO7980) and the removal of any "Incompletes" (I grades) from the transcript.

We expect students to obtain ABD status prior to beginning the fourth year in the program.

Comprehensive Exam

The Comprehensive or Qualifying Exam tests your knowledge and understanding of geographic philosophy, theory, models, concepts, findings, and methodology. Minor or special minor subject areas are tested through questions submitted through the Minor Representative on your committee. There are both written and oral portions to the exam, which should be taken in by the end of the fifth/beginning of the sixth semester to remain on track in the program, but may be taken as early as the supervisory committee deems the student ready. Students should consult with all members of their Committee in the semester prior to the exam in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their current background and preparation. Each committee member chooses how they wish to help the student prepare for the exam – it is not mandatory that the student be furnished with sample questions or a readings list. At the beginning of the semester when the exam is taken, the Committee Chair must email all Geography faculty members stating the general and specific fields of interest, as well as soliciting questions. Questions relating directly to the student's proposed plan of research are not to be asked at this time. Any faculty member may submit questions for the student, in addition to those from the Supervisory Committee. Each member of the Supervisory Committee may submit questions. These are given to the Committee Chair who will administer the exam. Usually a student answers questions from one faculty member per day. The student will answer questions over a four to five-day period (usually 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Exam conditions are established by each committee member (e.g., open-book, etc.). Plagiarism is a serious offense and any student found to commit plagiarism is subject to disciplinary action such as failure of the exam and/or being reported to the Student Honor Council for possible disciplinary action.

After at least 2 weeks have passed, an oral defense of the written answers will be undertaken. Students cannot proceed to the proposal defense prior to achieving a Satisfactory Pass for their Comprehensive Exams. **Outcomes:**

- (a) **Satisfactory Pass** - proceed to next step
- (b) **Conditional Pass** - must do additional work
- (c) **Fail**- withdraw from Ph.D. program or retake

Proposal Defense

The dissertation proposal should be submitted to your Chair and, upon the Chair's approval, to the Committee members, **1-6 months** after the Comprehensive or Qualifying exam. When **ALL** members of your committee agree, the Chair will schedule an oral defense of the proposal. All Supervisory Committee members must participate in this defense.

Possible outcomes:

- (a) **Acceptable:** only minor revisions are required and will be approved by your Chair.
- (b) **Conditional Acceptance:** substantial revisions needed which are to be approved by the entire committee.
- (c) **Unacceptable:** proposal must be substantially rewritten and defended within two months.

To be on track in the program, students should pass their proposal defense and attain ABD status by the end of their third year in the Ph.D. program. Once the dissertation proposal is approved, the student may inform the Graduate Secretary who will then prepare the necessary paperwork for the student to enter Doctoral Candidacy. Between admission to Candidacy and graduation at least **2 terms must pass** if the candidate is in full-time residence, or 1 year if the candidate is less than full time. In addition, students must graduate within **5 years** of becoming ABD, or exams must be retaken.

Completion of the Dissertation

The remainder of the program will be devoted to research and the writing of the dissertation. University regulations discourage changes in topic after admission to Candidacy. Any substantial changes in the proposed dissertation research must be approved by the student's Ph.D. Supervisory Committee. The completed dissertation should demonstrate the ability of the student to perform independent research and to present findings and interpretations in a clear, grammatically correct style. The dissertation must make an original contribution to the discipline of Geography and be of publishable quality. It can follow a research paper format (minimum 3 papers with overall Introduction and Conclusions chapters) or a more traditional thesis, and should be prepared according to the requirements of the University of Florida Graduate School. The Ph.D. Supervisory Committee must judge the finished dissertation as being ready for defense before the final oral exam (defense) is scheduled. All members of the Supervisory Committee will carefully read the dissertation and provide feedback. Students must plan well in advance to give committee members time to read the completed dissertation – two weeks minimum is a good rule of thumb. Make all edits and get form signed by all committee members stating you are cleared to set a defense date. Do this before you approach Desiree to schedule a room for defense.

After submitting the dissertation and completing all other prescribed work for the degree, the candidate will be given an (oral) final examination by his/her Supervisory Committee. The Chair must notify the department, via email, of the proposed oral defense date no later than **10 business days** (including Spring Break) prior to the scheduled date. The email should include the document title, names of committee members, and location and date of the oral presentation. Also, no later than **10 business days** prior to the scheduled defense, the student must place a copy of their document for public inspection in TUR3141. This document must be properly formatted with all tables, figures, front matter, abstract, etc. All Supervisory Committee members must participate in the Final Examination. At the beginning of the oral exam, the Ph.D. Candidate will summarize the major objectives, rationale, methodology, and findings of the dissertation in a brief presentation. The Candidate will then answer any questions from the Committee, attending faculty and students. After a satisfactory defense, all Supervisory Committee members should sign the signature pages and the Final Examination form, which are obtained from the Graduate Secretary. These may be retained by the chair of the Supervisory Committee until acceptable completion of corrections. Students are responsible for observing all published deadlines to graduate in a given semester. **Remember that faculty are only paid Aug 15 – May 15 and are not available for summer defenses.** Plan accordingly.

Ph.D. Program Course Requirements (90 hours minimum)

Cred.	Course	Notes
30	Credits from your masters (whether it was in geography or not)	Transfer is automatic if courses taken at UF. Do paperwork to transfer credits as soon as you have your final transcript– individual courses do NOT appear on your UF transcript; a block of 30 credits is listed. Courses must have been taken within 7 years.
4	GEO5920 Colloquium (1 credit) (fall and spring) (in addition to credits from master's program)	Must attend 4 semesters – it is best to do this in first 2 years to meet residency requirement; can register in later semesters; must present dissertation research after becoming ABD
3	GEO6118 Contemporary Geographic Thought	If taken at UF, requirement is met. Cannot be waived otherwise.
6	GEO6160 Intro Quantitative Methods Geography (fall) <u>AND</u> GEO6161 Intermediate Quant. Methods Geog (spring)	Take first fall semester. If taken previously, provide syllabus and get waiver from instructor - take GEO6161 Intermediate Quant first spring semester.
3 or 4	Techniques Requirement (in addition to coursework from previous degrees) Take one of the following courses:	GEO5945 Field Methods in Geography GEO6938 Advanced Remote Sensing GEO6938 Appl. GIS for disease ecol. & epidemiology GEO6938 GIS Programming GIS5038C Remote Sensing GIS5107C Geog Info Sys Research GIS6104 Spatial Networks MET6752 Atmospheric Data Analysis
6	GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	Take at least 2 additional courses in geography department that do not double other requirements
3	GEO6119 Proposal Writing in Geography	
9	<u>NOT</u> GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	Take 9 hours minimum (21 hours maximum)
3 +	GEO7979 Advanced Research	Register in semester taking comps and defending proposal; unlimited credits count towards degree
3 +	GEO7980 Doctoral Research	Must be ABD; unlimited credits; must take 3 hours in semester graduating (fall or spring)
90	Hours needed for Degree	Be sure ALL GEO6938 Special Topics courses have actual titles!

- Notes: a) only 12 hours of GEO6905 can count towards degree
 b) a minor is not required by either the University or CLAS
 c) GEO6938 is a generic number – subject to change
 d) Be sure ALL GEO6938 Special Topics courses have actual titles
 e) For a list of all “on the books” courses offered by our department, see <http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=833>