



Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Geography
University of Florida
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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.

For more complete information see:

<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/handbook.pdf>

General Information

ANNUAL REPORTING ON PROGRESS:

Students are required to provide an annual report on their progress by **September 1** each year, starting year two of their program. For doctoral students this will include the Individual Development Plan, Program of Study, and Annual Activities Report. For Masters students this will include the Program of Study and Annual Activity Report. Templates for each of these reports are available on the Geography Department Website under Forms.

1. **Individual Development Plan (IDP) - PhD.** The Graduate School requires that all PhD students complete an **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** with guidance from their advisor during year one, and that it be updated annually and reviewed by the student's advisor. The IDP is a planning tool for students, to be completed and updated throughout their academic careers at UF. An IDP helps students to assess and evaluate which skills and aptitudes would be most beneficial for the professional and personal goals they have after graduating from UF. The document is student-driven, and meant to be revised or updated periodically. The aim is to capture a student's changing set of tools, values, and interests, and adjust their goals in conjunction with the resources available to them in their programs, at their institutions, and their intended areas of expertise.

Students are required to meet with their advisors at least one time per year to discuss and update the IDP. **A copy of the IDP, signed by the student's advisor must be submitted digitally to the Graduate coordinator (graduatecoordinator@geog.ufl.edu) annually by September 1.**

2. **Program of Study – MA/MS and PhD.** This form is completed by Masters and Doctoral students with the assistance of their advisor and supervisory committee. This form should be completed during year one, and presented to the student's supervisory committee for approval at the first committee meeting. **Every year the program of study should be updated and submitted digitally to the Graduate coordinator (graduatecoordinator@geog.ufl.edu) by September 1. A copy of this completed form must be presented to the graduate coordinator for final graduation check.**

3. **Annual Activities Reports (AAR) - MS and PhD.** This report documents the student's accomplishments for the previous year (7/01/xx to 6/30/xx), including milestones achieved, presentations and papers published, as well as grants and awards earned. **This report must be reviewed and signed by the student's advisor, and submitted digitally to the Graduate coordinator (graduatecoordinator@geog.ufl.edu) annually by September 1.**

FINAL GRADUATION CHECK

Students must schedule a **Final Graduation Check** with the Graduate Coordinator at least two semesters before planned graduation. Students must bring a completed Program of Study Form as well as an informal copy of their transcripts.

GEOGRAPHY COLLOQUIUM SERIES

The Geography Department has a weekly colloquium series held on Thursdays at 3PM.

The weekly colloquium serves several purposes: It provides:

- A forum for external speakers.
- A "Shop window" in which new graduate students can view the most recent research of faculty members and their fellow graduate students.
- A friendly forum in which students can receive valuable feed-back about their research and presentation skills before presenting at professional meetings or interviews for employment.
- An opportunity to give and receive intellectual stimuli and suggestions and to learn about research techniques and terminology from areas of specialization other than your own.
- A weekly meeting at which one can catch up on the academic and social activities of the department.

Graduate student attendance is required for a set number of semesters, as described below. Nevertheless, all students are encouraged to attend regularly while resident on the UF Campus.

- **PhDs must attend 4 semesters and register for 4 credit hours (1/semester).**
 - PhDs must give a professional job talk on their dissertation research after becoming ABD, and only after at least 2/3 of research is complete (i.e. 2 of 3 papers). If the presentation is given without clear completion of research, the student will be required to present again at a later date.
- **MA/MS must attend 2 semesters and register for 2 credit hours (1/semester).**
 - MA/MSs must present their thesis during designated poster sessions before graduating.
- Students may choose to attend colloquium, and register for credit in a later semester. But, in this case the student is responsible to (1) advise responsible faculty of intention, (2) maintain a letter of completion with grade at end of term, and (3) provide completion letter to department at time of registration for credit. Students are not permitted to register for colloquium credit with intention to attend during later semester.

Email Correspondence from the Department, Graduate School, and UF will only be sent to your Gatorlink account, so it's important that you monitor your Gatorlink account daily and be sure you are subscribed to Geography's list-serv.

Plan Ahead to complete degree in timely fashion. Remember that most faculty are on 9 month appointments from Aug 15 – May 15 and are not available for summer defenses. In addition, after 7 years the Graduate School deems coursework invalid, and, consequently, required courses will need to be repeated. Finally, be aware of the Graduate School's deadlines for applying for graduation and submitting theses and dissertations, especially if you plan to graduate in a specific semester. Knowing the deadlines is the student's responsibility.

Degrees Offered, Concentrations, Minors, and Certificates

Master of Arts and Master of Science: Degree requirements are identical; consult Graduate Information Management System (GIMS) to be sure your degree is listed correctly.

Doctor of Philosophy: For students who possess a Master's degree, which can be from any field.

Concentrations: Applications of Geographic Technologies, Climate Science, Geographic Information Systems, Hydrologic Sciences, Tropical Conservation and Development, Wetland Sciences. Although Geography must add a concentration to your degree in the Student Information System, we do not have a list of requirements for these and cannot advise students on course selection.

Minors: You may choose to add a minor to your degree. It can be existing, or you can create your own. You must have a committee member unaffiliated with Geography to represent your minor.

Certificates: Geography currently advises graduate students for the certificate in Applied Atmospheric Sciences. Other certificates are available but we do not have a list of their requirements and cannot advise students on course selection. List of available graduate-level certificates: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/academics/graduate-certificates-list>. Students must apply for certificates online at: <http://www.admissions.ufl.edu/start.html>

Definition of Good Academic Standing / Satisfactory Progress

All students must maintain a 3.0 GPA each semester to remain in good academic standing. For PhD students, great progress is admission to candidacy at the end of three years in the program. Satisfactory status is achieved for admission to candidacy prior to the end of 4 years. Beyond this time, students will not receive priority consideration for departmental funding or travel awards. Although great progress is to complete all degree requirements within two years of attaining ABD status, all work for the doctorate must be completed within 5 calendar years after the qualifying examination to remain in good academic standing.

All students registering for GEO6971, GEO7979, or GEO7980 must contact their advisor prior to the end of drop/add and submit a plan for research that term. Within one week after classes end, the student must contact the advisor with a progress report. Failure to submit a progress report will result in a grade of U being assigned for those credits.

Options for Support: Assistantships and Fellowships

The department supports graduate students with a limited number of Teaching Assistantships. Incoming PhD students may receive Fellowships or top-up awards – Graduate School rules prohibit these awards being made to current students. Individual faculty may have funding for Research Assistants, but students must contact faculty directly to inquire about these opportunities. All students must be in good academic standing and be making satisfactory progress to be eligible for funding.

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 an Advisor who will serve as Committee Chair. This professor must have Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) in the Department of Geography. The Advisor 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 faculty members in an effort to identify potential committee members. Specific rules governing the formation of the committee are set by the Graduate School, so please consult the Graduate Student Handbook. Accordingly, Geography cannot be in the minority on any committee. Masters-level committees must have three members and two must be from Geography. For Ph.D. students, committees must consist of at least four members, at least two must be from Geography, 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 the Student Information System. Please check 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 your **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.

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 poster presentation of the research at 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 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 Advisor 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. 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 submit it to committee members for approval. All committee members must sign a **Thesis Defense Clearance Form** to affirm the student is approved for defense. This must be done prior to scheduling a room for defense through the Graduate Secretary. Once the date is set, the Advisor 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, date and time of the oral presentation. Also, no later than **10 business days prior** to the scheduled defense, the student must place a copy of their thesis document for public inspection in TUR3141. This document must be properly formatted in accordance with the Graduate School guidelines with all tables, figures, front matter, abstract, etc.

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). **Remember that most faculty are only paid Aug 15 – May 15 and are not available for summer defenses.** Plan accordingly.

Students should schedule a Graduation Check with the Graduate coordinator at least two semesters prior to the semester they plan to graduate.

Master's Program Course Requirements

CH	Course	Notes
2	GEO5920 Colloquium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must attend 2 semesters, and it is recommended that this is done during first year. • Students may choose to register for credit in a later semester, but they must maintain letter of attendance & grade, which is required to register for credit. • Students must present their thesis during designated poster session before graduating.
3	GEO6118 Contemporary Geographic Thought	Required Course to be taken at UF for all graduate students. No Waivers permitted.
3	One Quantitative Methods Course. Choose From: GEO6160 Intro Quant Methods GEO6161 Intermediate Quant Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be taken the first fall semester if possible. • If GEO6160 taken previously, take GEO6161 Intermediate Quant first spring semester. • If both have been taken, this requirement is met, and student must get a WAIVER FORM signed by instructor for graduate file in the department. • If waived, student must take 3 CH of any Geography course (GEO, GEA, MET, GIS)
3 or 4	One Techniques Course (in addition to coursework from previous degree)	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 Others, get approval from graduate coordinator & advisor.
3	GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	Take at least 1 additional course (3CH) in Geography that does not count for another requirement.
3	<u>NOT</u> GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	Take 3 CH outside of the department, taught by a non-geographer.
3 or 6	GEO6971 Thesis Hours	Must take 3 CH in semester graduating, maximum of 6 CH count towards 30 hours for degree.
21	Minimum CH in GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	A minimum of 21 of the 30 credit hours must be in Geography (GEA/GEO/GIS/MET).

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 before graduation

e) For a list of all “on the books” courses offered by our department, see

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=2479>

f) If you had any requirements waived (e.g. Quant Methods) you must make up the required number of CH with other, additional GEO, GIS, GEA, MET courses from the Geography program. A course being waived does NOT waive the CH requirement for those Geography hours.

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, a public 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 public 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 subject area(s) are tested through questions submitted through the Minor Representative on your committee. There are written and oral portions to the exam, which should be taken 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 Advisor 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 Advisor 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.

Possible Outcomes:

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

Proposal Defense

The dissertation proposal should be submitted to your Advisor and, upon the Advisor's approval, to the Committee members, **1-6 months** after the Comprehensive or Qualifying exam. When **ALL** members of your committee agree, the Advisor will schedule, and announce via e-mail to all Geography faculty and graduate students, a public 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 Advisor.
- (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 six 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 must 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 **two 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 format, 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 the form signed by all committee members stating you are cleared to set a defense date. Do this before you approach the Graduate Secretary 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. Before a date can be set for the oral defense:

1. A complete copy of the dissertation must be received and reviewed by ALL committee members., who must sign the **Thesis Defense Clearance form** to affirm the student is approved for defense.
2. Only AFTER this document has been signed can a student then start the process of setting a defense date with the supervisory committee and reserving a location with the assistance of the Graduate Secretary.
3. Once a date is set, the Advisor 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.
4. 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.
5. All Supervisory Committee members must participate in the Final Examination.

At the beginning of the public 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 must sign the signature pages and the Final Examination form, which are obtained from the Graduate Secretary. These may be retained by the advisor until acceptable completion of corrections.

Students are responsible for observing all published deadlines to graduate in a given semester, so be sure to check with the Graduate School. As a reminder, most faculty are on 9 month appointments, Aug 15 – May 15, and are not available for summer defenses. Plan accordingly.

FINAL GRADUATION CHECK. Students should schedule a Graduation Check with the Graduate coordinator at least two semesters prior to the semester they plan to graduate.

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

CH	Course	Notes
30	Credits from your Master's (whether it was in Geography or not)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer is automatic ONLY if courses were taken at UF in Geography. • If courses were from a different graduate program at UF or from a different institution, these will need to be transferred into the Geography program, which requires your FINAL OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT to complete the necessary process (UF transcripts do not list individual courses, and these details are required). • Confirm that courses were taken within 7 years of admission to doctoral program and that all 30 CH were awarded with a letter grade (S/U grades don't transfer). • Bring documentation to the Graduate Secretary to complete the process (complete process in year one).
4	GEO5920 Colloquium - 1 CH per term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must attend 4 semesters, and it is recommended that this is done during years 1 and 2. • Students may choose to register for credit in a later semester, but they must maintain letter of attendance & grade, which is required to register for credit. • Students must give a professional job talk on their dissertation research after becoming ABD, and only after at least 2/3 of research is complete (i.e. 2 of 3 papers). If the presentation is given without clear completion of research, the student will be required to present again at a later date.
3	GEO6118 Contemporary Geographic Thought	If taken at UF, the requirement is met. It cannot be waived otherwise.
6	Two Quant Methods Courses. GEO6161 Intermediate Quant. Methods Geog (spring) AND GEOXXXX Advanced Quant Methods Geog. NOTE: IF you have not taken GEO6160 Intro Quantitative Methods Geography or its equivalent previously, you must take this course before starting the sequence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intermediate and advanced sequence is the minimum requirement for doctoral students. • If possible, the sequence should be taken in years 1 & 2. • If you have not taken the Intro Quantitative Methods Geography or its equivalent, which is a prerequisite, you will be required to take this in addition, before taking the sequence. • If either of the courses in the sequence have been taken, the student must provide the syllabus and get a WAIVER FORM signed from instructor for their graduate file in the department. • If either of these courses are waived, the student must take an additional 6 CH of any Geography course (GEO, GEA, MET, GIS).
6-8	Two methods/techniques courses in Geography (in addition to coursework from previous degrees)	Choose from the following list: 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 GIS5028C Advanced Air Photo Interpretation GEO6938 Advanced Research Methods in Medical Geography

		GEO6938 Spatial Econometrics Additional GEO/GEA/GIS/MET, get approval from graduate coordinator & advisor.
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	Proposal writing course in another department can be substituted with the authorization of your advisor.
9	<u>NOT</u> GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	Take 9 credit hours minimum (21 hours maximum) outside of Geography. The expectation is that this course is not taught by a Geography faculty member.
3 +	GEO7979 Advanced Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register in semester taking comprehensive exams and defending proposal. • Unlimited credits count towards degree
3 +	GEO7980 Doctoral Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be ABD to register • Unlimited credits count towards degree. • Must register for 3 hours in semester graduating (fall or spring).
90	Hours needed for Degree	Be sure ALL GEO6938 Special Topics courses have actual titles!
39	Minimum GEA/GEO/GIS/MET	A minimum of 39 of the 90 credit hours must be in Geography (GEA/GEO/GIS/MET).

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=11&navoid=2479>

f) If you had any requirements waived due to already having fulfilled course requirements (e.g. stats etc.) you must make up the required number of credit hours with other, additional GEO, GIS, GEA, MET courses from the Geography program.