



Policies for Graduate Study in Geography

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KU THE UNIVERSITY OF
KANSAS

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Although the Graduate School sets minimal hours requirements for both the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, most students take coursework beyond this basic core. Formal classes and seminars constitute the heart of degree programs, but independent study through readings-research-problem courses is often a useful adjunct. Students wanting to take more than six hours of independent study courses, however, must first obtain permission from the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). In addition, a one-page statement of the nature of each independent course shall be prepared by the student, signed by the professor involved, and placed in the student's file. If these statements are not so filed, the student will not be permitted to take the M.A. oral or Ph.D. comprehensive exam.

Students are strongly discouraged from requesting "incompletes" in lieu of regular letter grades. Students with six or more hours of "incomplete" grades will be denied permission to enroll until these hours are reduced to the allowable limit (i.e., five hours).

The department recommends that Graduate Teaching Assistants have their teaching evaluated by faculty. Students should ask professors of their choice to visit their classes, and then, perhaps, repeat the procedure in subsequent semesters as a way of measuring improvement. Evaluation results may be provided via a meeting between the student and the faculty member, a standard departmental peer evaluation form (available in the departmental office), or a letter. Beyond the obvious advantage of improving teaching, this process will enable faculty members to comment directly on teaching skills when writing letters of recommendation for on-campus awards or postgraduate positions.

All graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend the various departmental colloquia offered throughout the year.

THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

Philosophy. The department envisions master's theses to be demonstrations of a student's ability to formulate a geographic research problem, collect and analyze relevant data or appropriate literature, arrive at logical conclusions, and present the entire exercise in an acceptably professional form. Theses are more often learning experiences than substantive contributions to the field. The Ph.D. dissertation, on the other hand, is a major research effort designed to contribute significant new knowledge to geography.

Guidelines for Proposals. Although a dissertation proposal is necessarily more elaborate than that for a M.A. thesis, all proposals are expected to contain three basic elements:

1. Problem statement--the research problem and/or questions presented in concise terms.

2. Relevant literature--a demonstration of how the proposed research relates to existing knowledge.
3. Outline of methodology--an outline of the general methodology if not specific techniques to be utilized in solving the research problem or answering the basic research questions.

Submission of Thesis/Dissertation for Committee Examination. Students should submit theses and dissertations directly to their advisors, and this advisor's approval must be received before a "clean and complete" version of this document is passed on to other committee members and the final oral examination is scheduled. A "clean" manuscript is typed in legible fashion with a minimum of handwritten corrections and is "complete" in the sense that the entire text is provided, together with table of contents, notes, bibliography, appendices, and supporting materials such as tables, graphs, maps, and illustrations. Graphics and maps should be carefully laid out with complete information in a format (size and shape) that is appropriate for inclusion in the final document. The thesis/dissertation need not, and in fact should not, be in final form for binding. The presumption is that some changes will be necessary and these are easier to recommend and implement if the copy is "clean and complete" but not "final." Five weeks before the intended date of a student's final oral examination, the student (with approval of the committee chair), will submit a complete draft of the thesis or dissertation to all committee members. The advisor and committee members have a responsibility to provide timely evaluations. Within two weeks of this submission, committee members must indicate whether or not the thesis or dissertation is defensible by signing a "Permission to Schedule Defense" form.

Presentation. Students are strongly encouraged to make a formal presentation, in which they discuss the results of their thesis or dissertation research. This presentation may be at the beginning of their final oral examination or at some other time convenient for the larger departmental and university community.

M.A. PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES

Admission and Prior Work. Entering students are expected to have had previous work comparable to a minimal bachelor's degree in geography. More specifically, to attain full standing as an M.A. candidate, a person must have had a course or equivalent background in each of the following fields: physical geography, human geography, regional study, and geographic information science (e.g., cartography, quantitative methods, GIS, remote sensing, field methods). If the student needs to take formal coursework to make up a deficiency, these credit hours will not count toward the M.A. A deficiency may be removed by 1) passing the specified course with at least a "C," 2) auditing the course and receiving a letter from the instructor indicating that the course requirements have been met, or 3) passing a written and/or oral examination comparable to the final exam. Deficiencies will be specified at matriculation and must be completed before the M.A. oral examination is taken.

Program and Coursework. The program at the M.A. level continues the general training of the bachelor's degree, but also provides for the development of some concentration in preparation for employment or further study. Upon a student's admission to the department, the Graduate Studies Committee will appoint an advisor. Early in the first semester (preferably in the first week of classes), the student should meet with this advisor to outline a tentative program of coursework for the degree. Such programs should be solidified by the time of enrollment for the second semester and submitted to the GSC for approval. The student and advisor then continue to discuss and update programs each semester, bearing in mind that any substantive changes must be approved by the GSC. Program sheets are available in the department office and must be filed before the comprehensive oral examination can be scheduled. All candidates must pass an oral examination over their coursework and then submit and successfully defend a thesis in a final oral examination. The course requirements are as follows:

General - One course in each of the following areas of study:
Geographic Information Science
Human Geography
Physical Geography
Regional Geography

Required - 805 (Introduction to Graduate Study), 806 (Basic Seminar), and 714 (Field Experience). Students wanting to petition for an exemption or alternative to GEOG 714 should examine the characteristics of the course, which are listed below:

1. Approximately three weeks of fieldwork in an environment unfamiliar to the student.
2. Extensive on-site instruction from at least two professors.
3. A course content that includes both human and physical geography along with geography techniques (e.g., interviews and GPS), and that addresses the means to attack and solve geographical problems.
4. Stresses a team approach to problem solving.

Any student who wishes to propose alternate work (or document previous experience) as a substitute for 714 should petition the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), and provide a detailed plan for that work. GSC must approve this plan before the work can be substituted for Geog. 714. Upon completion of the work, students must prepare a 10-page report summarizing the content of the substituted activities for approval by GSC. One alternative to 714 is to take a similar course at another college or university.

Any questions about Field Experience class should be directed to the department's director of graduate studies.

Electives - at least three courses in an approved area of concentration. (Courses taken to meet the "general" requirement may not be double counted here.)

Thesis - 1-6 hours

Total credit hours: a minimum of thirty

The Master's Thesis. Ideally, work on the M.A. thesis should begin during the second full-time semester so that field, laboratory, or library work can be done the following summer. During this second semester, the student should decide on the general area of thesis research and select a member of the faculty who is competent in that area and willing to supervise the thesis and serve as the student's general advisor. This faculty member may be different from the initial advisor. Two additional faculty members must also read and approve the thesis and sign it after a successful defense. One of these two readers may be from outside the department. All committee members must be approved by the GSC and recommended to the graduate school. Submission procedures for the thesis are discussed on page two of this booklet.

Comprehensive Examination. An oral, comprehensive examination is scheduled near the end of formal coursework and while the thesis is in preparation (at a minimum the student must be in the thirtieth hour of enrollment). The examining committee is comprised of a minimum of three members of the geography faculty selected by the student and the advisor with the approval of the GSC. Additional faculty members from geography or other departments may attend and participate if they wish. In petitioning for this approval, the student must submit the list of three examiners (plus the proposed date and time) at least three weeks prior to the scheduled examination.

Other Procedures. All master's students who have completed required coursework for their degrees are required to be continuously enrolled until all requirements for the degree are completed. No enrollment is necessary for the summer term. The Graduate School has established a maximum time limit of seven years between initial graduate enrollment and completion of all degree requirements.

When the oral exam has been passed and the thesis completed and defended, both electronic and hardbound copies need to be prepared. Both should include an abstract of no more than 150 words. A hardbound copy with original signatures by the advisor and the other two committee members is required for the department. The KU Libraries recommend the following binders that can bind paper copies of your thesis and additionally offer print-from-electronic file services: 1) Heckman Bindery (<http://www.thesisondemand.com/>) or 2) Acme Bookbinding (<http://www.acmebook.com/bindery/thesis>). The student must turn in a receipt showing that arrangements have been made for such work prior to the deadline for graduation set by the Graduate School. It is also customary for the student to provide a bound copy for the advisor.

The thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School and UMI Dissertation Publishing electronically using Portable Document Format (PDF). Instructions for this process are available at the KU graduate school website. See also UMI's website at <http://dissertations.umi.com/ku/>. In addition to this electronic submittal, a student must submit a paper copy of the title page and an "acceptance page" with original signatures to the Graduate School in 300 Strong Hall. Formats for both of these are at the graduate school website.

Departmental M.A. students desiring to continue at KU for their Ph.D. studies must apply to the Graduate Studies Committee. The application consists of a letter requesting admission accompanied by letters of evaluation from at least two KU faculty members in a position to judge the student's performance at the graduate level; one of these letters must be from the chair of the student's M.A. committee. A student is eligible to apply any time after successfully passing his or her M.A. examination. No more than nine hours of coursework completed within the M.A. program and in excess of the thirty-hour minimal requirement therein will be allowed to count toward Ph.D. requirements.

JOINT MASTER'S PROGRAM IN GEOGRAPHY AND URBAN PLANNING

This interdisciplinary program combines in three years the degrees of MA in geography and Master of Urban Planning. Details are available in a separate booklet available either online or from either of the two departments. Entering students should submit separate applications to each department. The joint degree entails 61 credit hours of coursework (39 in planning, 22 in geography) including a thesis.

PH.D. PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES

Prerequisites and Admission. Normally aspirants for the doctorate will have satisfied requirements comparable to the University of Kansas M.A. in geography, including the thesis. Students from other disciplines may find it necessary to eliminate deficiencies early in their program. Deficiencies will be specified at matriculation and must be completed before the Ph.D. comprehensive examination is taken. Under special circumstances, students may proceed directly from the B.A. to the Ph.D., but this is done only at the discretion of the department through approval by an advisor and the GSC.

Programs and Coursework. The doctoral program generally includes sixty hours of work beyond the M.A. of which eighteen to thirty hours will be satisfied by the dissertation. No specific credit-hour figure can be set for a doctoral degree because each program is designed on an individual basis. Of greater importance is the student's demonstrated competence in the selected area(s) of specialization. The program is comprised of formal courses, seminars, individual research and reading, and preparation of a dissertation. Although no "outside minor" is formally required of candidates, the department favors study in auxiliary departments.

Programs are planned with the advisor and then approved by the GSC. Such approval must be secured at latest by the second month of the second semester of study. Changes in the approved program can be initiated by the student at any time but must be approved by the advisor and the GSC. Program sheets are available in the department office and must be filed before the comprehensive examination can be scheduled.

Required Courses. Geography 714, Field Experience, is the only required course at the Ph.D. level. This three-week summer course is designed to familiarize the student with field techniques in both physical and human geography. Students wanting to petition for an exemption or alternative to GEOG 714 should examine the characteristics of the course, which are listed below:

1. Approximately three weeks of fieldwork in an environment unfamiliar to the student.
2. Extensive on-site instruction from at least two professors.
3. A course content that includes both human and physical geography along with geography techniques (e.g., interviews and GPS), and that addresses the means to attack and solve geographical problems.
4. Stresses a team approach to problem solving.

Any student who wishes to propose alternate work (or document previous experience) as a substitute for 714 should petition the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), and provide a detailed plan for that work. GSC must approve this plan before the work can be substituted for Geog. 714. Upon completion of the work, students must prepare a 10-page report summarizing the content of the substituted activities for approval by GSC. One alternative to 714 is to take a similar course at another college or university.

Any questions about Field Experience class should be directed to the department's director of graduate studies.

An advisor, upon review of the student's record, may recommend Geography 805 and/or Geography 806 to an incoming Ph.D. student.

Major Areas of Study. The capabilities and interests of the department fall into four areas of study: geographic information science, physical, human, and regional geography. A student concentrating within one of these divisions will develop a program in consultation with professors in that area. This program usually will include work in other aspects of geography and related disciplines. A student also may develop a second concentration if he or she takes at least nine hours in that specialty and includes a professor from that second area on the committee for the comprehensive examination. This second area of concentration may lie outside of geography.

MAJOR AREAS OF STUDY FOR THE PH.D.

I. Geographic Information Science

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Cartography | McCleary, Slocum |
| Geographic Information Systems | Dobson, Egbert, Feddema, Li, Price, Slocum |
| Remote Sensing | Braaten, Brunsell, Egbert |

II. Physical Geography

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|---------------|--|
| Biogeography | Brown, W. Johnson |
| Climatology | Braaten, Brunsell, Feddema, Tucker, van der Veen |
| Geomorphology | W. Johnson |
| Pedology | Woods |

III. Human Geography

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Cultural | Herlihy, J. Johnson, Myers, O'Lear, Shortridge, Woods |
| Historical | Herlihy, Shortridge, Woods |
| Political | Myers, O'Lear, Warf |
| Regional Development | Brown, Cheong, Warf |
| Urban | Myers, Warf |

IV. Regional Geography

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Africa | Myers |
| East Asia | Cheong |
| Latin America | Brown, Herlihy, Woods |
| Russia and East Europe | O'Lear |
| United States | Shortridge |
| Oceania | J. Johnson |

The level of competence attained in the major study area should be such that the graduate can teach upper-level seminars and conduct research in that area. If a second area of concentration is chosen, it is often complementary to the first. Here the graduate is expected to have knowledge sufficient to teach undergraduate courses at the introductory and intermediate levels, even if teaching is not the ultimate career objective.

In addition to the area(s) of specialization, the candidate is expected to have a broad background in general geography as well as knowledge of those research skills most appropriate to the areas of specialization. This background is primarily gained through coursework requirements in the bachelor's and master's degree programs, which are prerequisites for Ph.D. work.

FLORS Requirement. Foreign language or research skills (FLORS) are important elements of any graduate program. Coursework necessary to meet this requirement should commence early in the program. Selection of a particular FLORS option must be approved by the student's advisor.

Possible options include the following:

1. Demonstrate a reading knowledge of two foreign languages relevant to the student's research interest. Usually this is accomplished by passing an examination with an appropriate member of the geography faculty (or with a member of a language department faculty if expertise is not available within the department) or by completing French 100, German 101, Italian 100, Latin 101, Danish 101, Russian 101, and/or Spanish 100. See the Graduate Catalog for details.
2. For a single foreign language, demonstrate a reading, writing, and speaking capability sufficient to enable the student to do field work without an interpreter. An examination for competence, including written and oral portions, will be conducted by a member of the geography faculty having expertise in that language or an examiner from the appropriate language department.
3. Demonstrate a satisfactory capability in two research skills from the list below. The actual courses must be approved by the student's advisor with the agreement of the GSC.
 - a. Computer Science--complete a computer-programming course in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (e.g., C++, Fortran, or Visual Basic) and create a substantial computer program that illustrates a geographic application of that language. Both the course and computer program must be approved by the Computer Programming Committee of the Department of Geography.
 - b. Mathematics--pass nine hours of courses at the 500 level or above.
 - c. Statistics--pass nine hours of courses outside the Geography Department at the 500 level or above.
 - d. An outside discipline relevant to the student's field(s) of specialization within geography, e.g. anthropology, biology, economics, geology, history, psychology--pass nine hours of courses at the 500 level or above, normally at KU, including at least one research seminar. (Atmospheric science courses may be used for this option, but not courses listed or cross-listed as geography.)
4. Demonstrate a reading knowledge in one foreign language and a satisfactory capability in one of the research skills listed above.

Students whose native language is not English may, in some cases, use their native language to fulfill part of the reading-knowledge aspect of FLORS. The Graduate School has ruled that the

student must, however, combine this native-language option with either reading knowledge of another non-English language (i.e. option 1 above) or one of the research skills mentioned in option 3. Using a native language to fulfill part of the FLORS requirement must have advisor and GSC approval.

Residency Requirement. In order to fulfill the university's residency requirement, a student must be involved full-time in academics for two semesters. One of these semesters can be a summer session. Full-time is defined as any of the following combinations:

- 1) 9 credit hours per semester; or 6 credit hours per summer session;
- 2) 8 credit hours per semester with a 30% TA or RA;
- 3) 7 credit hours per semester with a 40% TA or RA;
- 4) 6 credit hours per semester with a 50% TA or RA;
- 5) 5 credit hours per summer session with a 25% TA or RA;
- 6) 3 credit hours per summer session with a 50% TA or RA.

Comprehensive Examination. The comprehensive examination is scheduled when the student and the advisor believe that competence in the specialty or specialties has been achieved. Normally the process occurs after the student has completed nearly all of his/her coursework, although Graduate School regulations stipulate that the testing can take place as soon as five months after enrollment in the Ph.D. program. Admittance to the examination is by approval of the GSC. In petitioning for admittance, the student must submit the following materials at least three weeks prior to the scheduled examination (forms are available for 1 and 2 in the departmental office).

1. a program sheet listing courses taken, grades received, etc.
2. demonstration that the FLORS requirements have been satisfied (see description above).
3. demonstration that the Residency Requirement has been satisfied (see description above).
4. a written dissertation proposal approved by the advisor (see guidelines on previous pages of this document).
5. a list of examination committee members. The Graduate School requires that the committee consist of at least five members of the graduate faculty. People outside the university can be appointed ad hoc members as necessary. At least one member must be from a KU department outside of geography and at least three members must represent the department. Members are chosen by the student in consultation with the advisor on the basis of expertise in the areas of specialization. They must also be approved by the GSC and recommended by the department to the Graduate School.
6. The date and time proposed for the oral portion of the examination.

The comprehensive examination normally focuses on the student's areas of specialization, including proposed dissertation research. It consists of two parts: written questions submitted by the committee members and then an oral examination. At least four members of the committee must submit written questions. The procedure is for each examiner to give his/her questions to the chair of the student's committee at least one week before the written examinations begin. The committee chair has the responsibility of screening these questions for overlap and clarity, and then administering them, one set per day. The questions may be open-book or closed at the discretion of the individual submitting the questions, and the student normally will have up to eight hours to complete each set of questions. At the conclusion of the written portion of the examination, the committee chair will poll the committee. A majority of the members must approve their individual written portions of the examination in order for the second (oral) portion to take place. In the oral section, students often are asked to elaborate and comment on their written answers. The focus is on the proposal, however, with probes into its scope, justification, and methodology being common. Significant revisions to the research subject and approach sometimes emerge from this process. Three grades are possible for the overall examination: "honors," "satisfactory," and "unsatisfactory." In the unsatisfactory case, the student may be allowed to repeat the process upon recommendation of the committee. Such repetition can be undertaken no sooner than ninety days after the last testing. The comprehensive examination may be taken no more than three times. Approval of the Graduate School must be secured for the scheduling of this procedure and the request must be submitted three weeks prior to the proposed date for the examination.

The Doctoral Dissertation. Serious work on the dissertation should begin no later than the third full-time semester of study for the Ph.D. and well before the scheduling of the comprehensive examination. When selecting a topic, the student first should make sure that an advisor exists who is able and willing to supervise on that subject. Then, usually in close consultation with this advisor, a proposal is developed to articulate the research idea for the rest of the examination committee. The advisor also serves as chair of this committee.

The dissertation committee, consisting of the advisor and at least four others, is designated immediately following the passing of the comprehensive examination and is usually comprised of members of the examination committee. This committee must include at least one member from a KU department outside of geography and must have at least two members from Geography. Committee members must be approved by the GSC and recommended to the Graduate School.

After successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the student is officially admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. By passing to the candidacy stage, the examination committee records its view that this person has a satisfactory dissertation proposal as well as the capability to complete the proposed task of research and writing. Although formal coursework is finished at this point, continued scholarly and professional development obligates the candidate to continue attendance at special-interest seminars and colloquia while still in residence. Minimum enrollment for the dissertation is eighteen postcomprehensive hours. Also, every student must be continuously enrolled, including summer sessions, from the time of candidacy until the dissertation is deposited at the Graduate School office. The Graduate School further

stipulates that a minimum enrollment of six hours is required each semester (plus three in summer) until this total of eighteen is achieved. Thereafter the enrollment may be dropped to one hour per semester, assuming that the dissertation is deposited in the Graduate School office within six months after the defense. Students who exceed this six-month limit must enroll in three hours per semester until the dissertation is so deposited.

When the dissertation committee has tentatively approved the dissertation, approval is sought from the Graduate Studies Committee to schedule the final oral examination. At least five months must elapse between the successful completion of the comprehensive examination and the date of this oral defense. The final oral examination committee has the same composition requirements as does the dissertation committee. Approval of the Graduate School must be secured for the scheduling of this exam and the request must be submitted to the GSC three weeks prior to the proposed date for the examination. Submission procedures for the dissertation are described on page two of this booklet.

When the oral exam has been passed and the dissertation completed, both electronic and hardbound copies need to be prepared. Both should include an abstract of no more than 150 words. A hardbound copy with original signatures by the advisor and the other committee members is required for the department. The KU Libraries recommend the following binders that can bind paper copies of your thesis and additionally offer print-from-electronic file services: 1) Heckman Bindery (<http://www.thesisondemand.com/>) or 2) Acme Bookbinding (<http://www.acmebook.com/bindery/thesis>). The student must turn in a receipt showing that arrangements have been made for such work prior to the deadline for graduation set by the Graduate School. It is also customary for the student to provide a bound copy for the advisor.

The dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School and UMI Dissertation Publishing electronically using Portable Document Format (PDF). Instructions for this process are available at the KU graduate school website. See also UMI's website at <http://dissertations.umi.com/ku/>. In addition to this electronic submittal, a student must submit a paper copy of the title page and an "acceptance page" with original signatures to the Graduate School in 300 Strong Hall. Formats for both of these are at the graduate school website.

The Graduate School has established a maximum time limit of eight years between initial enrollment in the doctoral program and completion of all degree requirements. For people earning both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from KU, the combined time limit is ten years.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Use of Departmental Resources. Only graduate students who hold teaching assistantships have access to photocopy and secretarial support. All graduate students have access to computers in the various laboratories so long as they follow posted guidelines. The department endeavors to provide desk space for every graduate student but people holding teaching assistantships and research assistantships have priority. All graduate students are provided with e-mail addresses.

Departmental Grievance Procedures. The Geography Department's grievance procedures are on file in the departmental office and are available upon request.

Student Rights and Responsibilities.

All graduate students are responsible for informing themselves of requirements of the Graduate School as stated in the most recent issue of the Graduate School Catalog, both the general requirements and those specific to geography. Members of the faculty and the staff of the graduate school are ready to answer questions and offer counsel.

The university's *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* describes protected rights and expectations for conduct. Included are rights to free speech, expression, assembly, pursuit of educational goals, privacy, and due process. It also outlines how student and campus organizations may operate, and describes nonacademic misconduct such as threats and violence against disrupting classes and events. The complete text of the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* is available on-line at www.ku.edu/~vcstuaff/rights.html or at the offices of the Vice Provost for Student Success and the Dean of Students.

January 2008