

Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences, University of Delaware

Graduate Program Policy Handbook

*revised June 18, 2021

1. Introduction

This handbook provides a statement of requirements for graduate degrees in the Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences (“the Department”), as well as explanations, advice and other information to help you plan your graduate program. Please be aware that the UD Graduate College has additional rules, requirements, and deadlines that are not addressed here; these policies can be found at: <https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/grad/>

Each individual student will follow a program designed to assist with working on a unique research problem, developing competence in a field of specialization, and establishing understanding of the discipline. You should be proactive as the driver of your graduate program and should begin to plan your course of study and research by reading through these policies, familiarizing yourself with the Graduate College policies and procedures, and by meeting with the Graduate Director and potential advisors in the program.

Graduate studies in the Department may lead to the following possible research- and thesis/dissertation-driven degrees:

1. Master of Arts in Geography (MA)
2. Master of Science in Geography (MS)
3. Doctor of Philosophy in Geography (PhD)
4. Doctor of Philosophy in Climatology (PhD) - Please note that the PhD in Climatology has its own Policy Handbook and is NOT governed by this document.

The Chair of the Department is responsible for the graduate degree programs, which are administered by the Department’s Graduate Director and advised by the Department’s Academic Council and the College of Earth, Ocean and Environment’s Assistant Dean of Graduate Services.

All core and joint faculty members of the Department are eligible to teach graduate courses and to serve as principal advisors for students enrolled in the graduate degree programs. Core faculty members have a primary appointment in Geography & Spatial Sciences. Joint faculty members have a primary appointment in another unit of the University and a percentage of their appointment is in the Department.

2. Admission

The Department is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment. As part of our holistic admissions process, we seek to uphold this commitment.

- a. Admission to these programs is based on the combined application portfolio of the applicant, including: GPA, letters of recommendation, and statement of research. We do not require nor allow for reporting of GRE scores. International applicants for whom English is a second language and who are not eligible for a waiver of proof of English language proficiency from the Graduate College will be required to undertake TOEFL or IELTS testing. Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet

all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths and research fit.

b. Students are considered for the PhD in Geography with a completed MA or MS degree that includes a thesis. The faculty may consider admission to the PhD in Geography for applicants with a non-thesis MA or MS degree, or in exceptional circumstances without a completed MA or MS degree, if they have substantial research and publication experience that constitutes sufficient preparation for admission at the PhD level. This will be evaluated by the Academic Council with consultation of potential advisor and feedback from faculty. Unanimous approval of Academic Council is required. Students completing an MA or MS in the department who signal intent to continue to a PhD may submit a change of classification form to enter the program in Geography. The faculty evaluates these internal applicants on a rolling basis and re-classification is not guaranteed.

3. Assessment

All students are expected to be active department citizens, which means participating in service activities, graduate student government, and the weekly departmental seminar. Additionally, all students are required to undertake a program of research and writing and demonstrate progress each academic year. Any students conducting research involving human or animal subjects must comply with Institutional Review Board Protocols and Certification requirements.

The following learning outcomes are a key component of graduate education and training in the department:

- Identify and develop a research question
- Understand and synthesize disciplinary literature
- Design and execute a research study
- Conduct data analysis
- Write and disseminate outcomes of research and analysis

These outcomes will be assessed through coursework, research, and an annual review of progress by the Department Academic Council, specifically:

- Annual Progress Report submission to the Academic Council
- End-of-term deliverables in required courses (including GEOG600 and methods courses)
- Problem-based learning and lab experiments
- Presentations for department and regional or national disciplinary meetings
- The thesis (MA/MS); the dissertation (PhD) defense(s)
- The comprehensive exam (PhD)

Reporting on Progress

On March 15th (middle of spring semester) of each year, students will submit a progress report to their advisor and, and their work supervisor if applicable (e.g., the Professor for courses they TA'd during the year or their supervisor on a research project on which they are funded). The advisor and work supervisor (if applicable) will provide comments on the report and forward it to the Academic Council within 10 days of receipt. The progress report is a standard department form used by all students for

Graduate Program Policy Handbook

*revised June 18, 2021

the reporting period. The Academic Council then reviews the material and sends a letter to the student within one month of the receipt of the report from the academic advisor and work supervisor. The goal is that the student will receive feedback on their performance no later than the end of the spring semester. The student's GPA will also be evaluated per Graduate College policy. The report will state whether the student is making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress towards their degree. If the student's progress is unsatisfactory, the student will be put on probation and given a list of achievable goals they must meet by the end of the fall semester. These goals could include writing a thesis proposal, completing field work, data analysis, or improving GPA, performance related to their teaching or research assistantship. At the end of the fall semester, the student's work will be evaluated by the Academic Council. The Graduate College offers opportunities for students to request a temporary leave of absence and/or parental accommodation from UD. If the student has not met the goals, the student will be dismissed from the program. An appeal process is available to students through the Graduate College.

An appeals process exists in the case of academic dismissal. See:

<https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/grad/current-students/academic-support/policies/>

“The student may appeal the termination by writing to the Graduate College. This appeal must be made within ten class days from the date on which the student has been notified of academic dismissal. The Vice Provost will review the appeal and may either uphold the dismissal, grant reinstatement or refer the case to the Graduate Hearing Board for resolution. If the Vice Provost grants reinstatement, the student must meet the conditions of the reinstatement. Failure to meet these conditions will result in dismissal from the program. A graduate student may be reinstated only once to a given major. The student's academic transcript will reflect the reinstatement with the appropriate academic probation status.”

4. Policies for Matriculated Students

a. Requirements for the MA and the MS (30 credits)

Credit Requirements

Course Credits: Students must complete a minimum of 24 course credits. Department approved graduate courses at the University of Delaware include any courses numbered 600 or higher (GEOG 868 and 869 cannot be used towards the course total). Students may additionally take courses in the department at the undergraduate level for graduate credit by enrolling in GEOG666 – Special Problems and establishing graduate-level coursework in consultation with the Instructor of Record. Undergraduate-level courses taken at the undergraduate level do not count toward the credit requirements. Per the Graduate College, no courses may be transferred from another degree program.

A student must be classified as full-time to be eligible to hold an assistantship or fellowship. Students holding a teaching assistantship, a research assistantship, a graduate assistantship, or a tuition scholarship must register for at least 6 credit hours of graduate-level courses each fall and spring semester to meet full-time status. Students holding a fellowship must register for at least 9 credit hours of graduate-level

Graduate Program Policy Handbook

*revised June 18, 2021

courses each fall and spring semester to meet full-time status. Students on contract in the summer must register for 3 credits to be considered full time. Students on contract in fall or spring semester who are completing a thesis or a dissertation and who have not submitted it to the Graduate College may register in sustaining status to meet full-time status.

Thesis Credits: Each student is required to enroll in at least 6 credits of GEOG869 – Master’s Thesis. These credits are in addition to required course credits. All 6 credits may be taken at once, or they may be divided between semesters. During the thesis research, data analysis, and writing, the student’s advisor will supervise these credits and will assign a grade of S or U at the end of each semester. These grades will be changed to a letter grade following the successful completion of the thesis.

Once all credit requirements are complete (courses – 24 credits; thesis – 6 credits) 30 credits total, the candidate will enter sustaining status and will register for UNIV 899 – Master’s Sustaining: Thesis.

Course Requirements

In their first year of the program, all incoming graduate students are required to enroll in GEOG600 – Prelude to Geography (3 credits). Students are also required to take one methods course in their skill area (3 credits).

As needed, all incoming students will complete a degree audit with the Graduate Director to determine their geography competency and to plan their incoming semester. Students are expected to complete courses that develop a core competency in their topic. Students will select additional classes in conversation with their advisor.

Thesis Committee Requirements

A thesis committee of at least three members will evaluate student progress and the thesis. The chair of the thesis committee is the main advisor for the student. Additional members of the committee will be determined by the student in conversation with their advisor. Students should select an advisor before the end of their first semester of the program. Faculty who have retired or resigned from the University may continue to chair committees of students whose work began under their direction prior to their retirement or departure from the University. The second reader on the thesis committee can be any member of the faculty in the Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences. A third, external member (outside of the Department) of the thesis committee will be faculty or should have received their doctorate in a related discipline. The third member may be from outside the University of Delaware. Students will file a form with the Graduate Director formalizing the committee and stating each member’s role (e.g. Chair).

Thesis Requirements

The purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate that the student can conduct original research under supervision and communicate the results clearly in English. All students will propose a research project, conduct research and data analysis, and complete a

master's thesis. The thesis must have standard components of academic writing including, but not limited to: an introduction, background and context for the topic; a literature review; methods and methodology; analysis and discussion. The format (e.g. monograph- or publication-style) of the thesis will be directed by the advisor, but these core elements must be present and defensible.

Three weeks before the defense, a final draft copy of the thesis must be submitted to the thesis committee for review and the candidate will notify the department of the date/time/venue of the thesis defense. The date of the defense presentation will be posted in the department and emailed to all faculty and students at that time.

The thesis committee determines whether and when the thesis has achieved the level of scope and quality necessary for a master's degree. Acceptance of the thesis requires the signatures of all members of the thesis committee. Additionally, the signature of the Chair of the Department indicates acceptance, on behalf of the entire department, of the membership and activities of the advisory committee. The thesis must also be signed by the Dean of the College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment and by a representative of the Provost.

The thesis will be defended in a public presentation held in the department. The presentation should be not more than 30-minutes in length. The public will have opportunity to ask questions. The committee will also ask questions as part of the public defense and will determine if the thesis is ready for submission.

The Graduate College has specific guidelines for the criteria and characteristics of the final submitted thesis that must be followed. In addition, the thesis will be written in English and must demonstrate proficiency. The manual can be found on the Graduate College website.

Timeline for completion

Students at the MA and MS level are expected to complete their degrees in two years, as indicated by the suggested timeline below. Some students may not be able to adhere to this schedule and will need to consult with the Graduate Director and their advisor regarding coursework, research, and department funding. The University of Delaware stipulates the time limit is ten consecutive semesters to complete the degree requirements for students entering a master's degree program.

- Fall Semester 1 – register for 9 course credits; before the start of winter term, identify an advisor
- Winter Session 1 – begin to develop thesis proposal and literature review
- Spring Semester 1 – register for 9 course credits, draft proposal to advisor, consultation about committee members, submit progress report to Academic Council
- Summer – Benchmark: 18 course credits complete. Begin thesis research and data gathering

Graduate Program Policy Handbook

*revised June 18, 2021

- Fall Semester 2 – register for 6 course credits, continue research and begin data analysis, form full thesis committee and determine dates for completion of degree with Graduate College, 3 credits of GEOG868 can be used to meet full-time status as needed
- Winter Session 2 – Benchmark: course credit requirement complete. Begin thesis drafting, continue data analysis
- Spring Semester 2 – enroll in 6 thesis credits, complete research, complete draft of thesis, prepare presentation of thesis, set thesis defense date and announce to department, defend thesis, complete Graduate College forms required for graduation, complete edits and finalize thesis, submit thesis to Graduate College

The Graduate College has a deadline each term for thesis submission and degree conferral that must be adhered to and can be found in the University of Delaware academic calendar. The department has a thesis committee signature form that must be signed and filed with the graduate director following a successful defense. Students are responsible for obtaining these forms and getting them signed by their committee members.

b. Requirements for the PhD in Geography (21 credits)

Credit Requirements

Course Credits: Students must complete a minimum of 12 course credits. At least 9 course credits must be completed in the department (or outside courses in a related discipline that are approved by the advisor and the Graduate Director). Courses outside the department can be used to fulfill the remaining 3 credits.

Department approved graduate courses at the University of Delaware include any courses numbered 600-level or higher (GEOG964 and 969 cannot be used towards course credits). Students may take courses in the department at the undergraduate level for graduate credit by enrolling in GEOG666 – Special Problems and establishing graduate-level coursework in consultation with the Instructor of Record. Undergraduate-level courses taken do not count toward the credit requirements.

All courses must be taken for a letter grade, unless the course is offered only on a pass/no pass basis. Credit will only be applied toward the graduate degree requirements with a grade of B (3.0) or better.

A student must be classified as full-time to be eligible to hold an assistantship or fellowship. Students holding a teaching assistantship, a research assistantship, a graduate assistantship, or a tuition scholarship must register for at least 6 credit hours of graduate-level courses each fall and spring semester to meet full-time status. Students holding a fellowship must register for at least 9 credit hours of graduate-level courses each fall and spring semester to meet full-time status. Students on contract in the summer must register for 3 credits to be considered full time. Students on contract in fall or spring semester who are completing a thesis or a dissertation and who have not submitted it to the Graduate College may register in sustaining status to meet full-time status.

Dissertation Credits: Each student is required to enroll in at least 9 credits of GEOG969 – Doctoral Dissertation. Enrollment for these credits is allowed only after achieving candidacy

status. GEOG969 will be given a temporary grade of S or U at the end of each semester, and a final grade will be submitted for the dissertation after completion of the defense. Pre-candidacy students needing credits to maintain full-time status for funding purposes may take GEOG964 – Pre-Candidacy Study, for a variable number of credits, pass/no pass.

Following completion of all requirements except the final dissertation, including the comprehensive examination, course credits (12 credits), and dissertation credits (9 credits), a student may enter sustaining status by enrolling in UNIV 999 – Doctoral Sustaining.

Course Requirements

In their first year of the program, all incoming graduate students who are new to the department are required to enroll in GEOG600 – Prelude to Geography (3 credits). Students are also required to take one methods course in their skill area (3 credits). Other necessary courses will be determined by the degree audit conducted by the Graduate Director, if new to the department, and/or in conversation with their PhD Committee Chair. Coursework should be appropriate to the student's research topic/methodology and may also be used in preparation for the comprehensive examination.

Committee Requirements

A dissertation committee made up of four to six members will evaluate student progress and assess the dissertation and defense. The advisor is the chair of the committee. Faculty who have retired or resigned from the University may continue to chair committees of students whose work began under their direction prior to their retirement or departure from the University. The advisor should be identified and confirmed with the Graduate Director before the end of the first year of the program. Two additional members of the committee should be faculty members in the department. At least one external member must be selected by the student in consultation with their advisor. The external member (outside of the Department) of the committee will be faculty or should have received their doctorate in a related discipline. The external member(s) may be from outside the University of Delaware. Departmental committee membership should be formally recognized by the Graduate Director and should be put in place prior to the preparation for the Comprehensive Examination. An external committee member should be identified and formally designated to the dissertation committee following the advancement to candidacy and preceding the dissertation proposal defense.

Advancement to Candidacy: the Comprehensive Examination

All PhD students must pass written and oral examinations to advance to candidacy. The written comprehensive exam consists of questions related to the sub-discipline, methods and methodology, topic and/or region of the student's work. The purpose of the exam is to demonstrate the student's expertise in their field. The exam committee is comprised of the internal (Geography) members of the dissertation committee. In consultation with their chair, a student can elect to have external committee member(s) sit on their exams committee.

In consultation with the departmental committee, in the semester preceding the exam, the student will prepare a list of core readings in three sets of literature identified in consultation with the committee. These sets of literature should draw on the student's training in geography more broadly, and may also be used to develop competency in methods/techniques or

methodology, their dissertation topic and/or theoretical framework(s). This shall be the reading period.

Following the reading period, the student, in consultation with their departmental committee will set a date for the written and oral exams. The oral portion of the exam must be scheduled within one month of the completion of the written exam.

The written exam:

Each departmental committee member will submit at least three questions to the committee chair. The guidelines for the written portion of the exam are as follows:

- There will be three sections of the exam; each section will have three questions. The student must answer at least two questions for each section.
- Students will have 48 hours to complete each section. Students who have a documented learning disability or for whom English is a second language may receive an additional 24 hours to complete each section of the exam.
- Each section will be administered one at a time with up to 24 hours (at the discretion of the student) passing before the beginning of the next answer period.
- The exam is closed-book, open-note. Students may use any notes or materials that are self-generated to support their exam. If a particular tool is necessary for the answering of a question, it may be requested by the student or committee members; its use should be stipulated by the committee chair.
- Citations should be used (author, year), but exact page numbers are not necessary.
- All answers should be type-written, double-spaced, use standard font, font-sizing, and margins and be accompanied by a works cited.

The oral exam:

The oral exam will be scheduled within 30 days of the completion of the written exam. It is not open to the public and is between the student and the exam committee. The oral exam is a follow-up on the written exam and is an opportunity for the student to defend and explain their answers. The oral exam should be not more than two hours in length. Following the defense of the written examination, the committee will meet in a closed session to evaluate the student's exam performance. Each committee member will register a "pass," "conditional pass," or "fail" for the entire, combined examination. An overall passing grade is decided by committee consensus, conferring a change of status and eligibility to take dissertation credits. A candidacy form must be filed with the Graduate College (Recommendation for Candidacy). In the case of a "conditional pass" additional work may be required in order for the candidate to pass. In this case the student will not advance to candidacy (with the form filed) until the additional work has been completed to the satisfaction of the committee. This work must be completed within one year of the date of the exam. In the case of an overall failing grade as determined by committee consensus, the committee will vote to determine if a new exam will be administered. At that time, the committee may specify that only the written or oral portion need be retaken, or they may specify that the entire exam must be retaken. A re-exam must take place within 60 days of the original oral exam. A second failure will result in academic dismissal. An appeal process is available to students through the Graduate College.

The Dissertation Requirements

Proposal: Upon successful advancement to candidacy, students should prepare a dissertation proposal. The proposal should take the form of an external grant proposal appropriate to the area of study (e.g. NSF DDRI; SSRC IDRF; Fulbright). In consultation with their advisor, the student will draft a proposal and prepare for a defense of the proposal to the committee within six months of advancing to candidacy. In a closed session that will not exceed three hours, the candidate will discuss the literature, research questions, methodology, and methods to be undertaken for the project and receive feedback from the dissertation committee. Typically, the student's presentation should 30-45 minutes in length.

An overall pass/conditional pass is decided by committee consensus. In the case of an overall failing grade as determined by committee consensus, the student will rewrite their proposal and a second oral defense will take place within six months from the date of the original proposal defense. A second failure will result in academic dismissal. An appeal process is available to students through the Graduate College.

Dissertation: Each student will conduct original research and will write a dissertation. The format of the dissertation may be a monograph or may follow a paper model. All students should discuss with their committee expectations of authorship, which will vary between dissertation candidates. A clear communication of authorship and intellectual property rights must be had between the student and their dissertation committee prior to completion of writing.

Monograph Model Requirements: In the case of the monograph, the student should work closely with their advisor to draft a dissertation that can later be revised for an academic press. It is not a requirement of the monograph model that any dissertation paper be published prior to the defense. However, recognizing that publishing research is a critical component of being a researcher at an R1 institution, students must publish at least one paper (from the Master's research or their PhD work) as part of their requirements for conferral of the PhD.

Paper Model Requirements: In order for the student to successfully complete the dissertation, at least three journal articles must be written. Students must send each paper to the committee for feedback prior to submission. The committee will advise the student on journal selection. The following conditions must be satisfied regarding these journal articles:

1. Paper 1 must be accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
2. Paper 2 must be under review for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
3. Paper 3 must be completed, although it does not yet have to be submitted.

For the dissertation itself, these papers must be combined in a document with an introduction and conclusion to the overall work presented in these papers.

Defense: The student should work closely with their advisor in the completion and distribution of their draft dissertation to the committee. The advisor will consult with all members of the

committee to determine the readiness of the candidate for a public defense. After the initial review of the dissertation, some edits may be required prior to the approval of a defense date.

Three weeks before the public defense, a final draft copy of the dissertation should be submitted to the committee for review and the candidate will notify the department of the date/time/venue of the defense. The date of the dissertation defense will be posted in the department and emailed to all faculty and students at that time. A Doctoral Defense Notification must be filed with the Graduate College two weeks ahead of the scheduled defense date.

The defense will be a public presentation where the candidate will discuss the main objectives and findings of their dissertation research. The presentation should not be more than 45-minutes in length. Following the presentation, the committee and the public will be invited to ask questions. The public question session may last up to one hour. The committee will meet with the candidate in a closed-door session following the public questions and ask additional questions. The committee meets privately after the defense to decide whether the candidate has passed. When the dissertation committee reaches consensus on a passing vote for the defense, the candidate will be invited to discuss any minor edits necessary prior to submitting the final copy to the Graduate College. If a consensus that the candidate has passed is not reached, the committee must determine a plan of action and timeline for the candidate. If, after a second defense, the candidate is still determined to have failed by the committee, the student will be dismissed from the program. An appeal process is available to students through the Graduate College.

The Graduate College has specific guidelines for the criteria and characteristics of the final submitted dissertation that must be followed. In addition, the dissertation will be written in English and must demonstrate proficiency. The manual can be found on the Graduate College website. A Dissertation Defense Certification must be filed with the Graduate College following a successful defense. If at any time following advancement to candidacy the composition of the committee changes a form must be filed with the Graduate College and the Graduate Director.

Timeline for completion

The timeline for a PhD varies widely among candidates depending on coursework, preparation for exams, funding, fieldwork, and other data gathering and analysis activities. An informal five-year plan should be discussed by the student with their advisor. However, all candidates should be aware that the Graduate College policy on degree timelines is as follows: “Students completing the requirements for the master’s degree who are subsequently granted permission to continue toward the doctoral degree are given an additional ten consecutive semesters. Students entering a doctoral program with a master’s degree are given ten consecutive semesters to complete the requirements. Students entering a doctoral program without a master’s degree are given fourteen consecutive semesters to complete the requirements. Students who change their degree plan and have transferred from one degree program to another degree program are given ten consecutive semesters from the beginning of the first year in the latest program. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the student’s advisory committee and the chair of the department’s graduate committee. The department will forward the request to the Graduate College. The office will determine the student’s eligibility for a time extension and will notify the student in writing of its decision to grant an extension of time.”

Milestones for expected completion are:

- Selection of advisor and general topic, completion of coursework (Year 1)
- Selection of internal committee, planning, reading and completion of comprehensive exams (Years 2-3)
- Drafting of proposal, selection of external committee member, defense of proposal (Years 3-4)
- Plan for research, analysis and dissertation; completion of research and analysis; writing and defense of dissertation (Years 4-5)

5. Assistantships and Fellowships in the Department of Geography

Support for graduate students is intended to facilitate the completion of degree requirements, original research and writing, and the development of professional skills. The department makes office space available to all degree-seeking and sustaining graduate students regardless of their assistantship or fellowship status. All Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) will sign a contract for their employment, which stipulates stipend and tuition benefits. TAs and RAs will additionally sign a contract on a per-semester basis with their faculty supervisor (who may or may not differ from their thesis or dissertation advisor). This contract is specific to the expectations of the supervisor for the class or research project to which the student is assigned). The funding period for internally executed assistantships and fellowships is the nine-month academic year, although some RA positions may be 12 months depending on available funding. The Graduate College has additional policies about outside work, which restrict the student from seeking other employment.

Teaching Assistants: Graduate students may be supported as Teaching Assistants. The Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning (CTAL) has resources that are available to all instructors on the UD campus (<https://ctal.udel.edu/>). TA work hours may fluctuate throughout the semester and between the courses TA'd. Not more than twenty hours of work per week (on average) should be performed as part of TA duties. The duties of the TA will be set out in a written contract that explains the role of the TA, which may include (based on the instructor's discretion): instruction in labs or discussion sections; attendance in lecture; preparation of some course materials; gathering materials for course; proctoring exams and grading; and/or holding review sessions and office hours for undergraduate students. The contract will be discussed and signed by the instructor and the TA and will be submitted to the Graduate Director each semester. Deviations from the contract should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Director or the Department Chair.

Research Assistants: RAs provide not more than twenty hours per week (on average) of assistance on a research project under the supervision of the Principal Investigator. Expectations for work in the nine-month period of funding should be set out in a contract (including winter session obligations), discussed and signed by the RA and the PI, and will be submitted to the Graduate Director each academic year. If the student is on a 12-month period of funding, a similar contract to the 9-month will be developed and an additional section about time for student research will be added. Deviations from the contract should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Director or the Department Chair.

6. Termination and satisfactory progress

Each year, the Academic Council will provide written feedback on progress based on the students' Progress Report and reports from the student's academic advisor, and, if applicable, their supervisor in their TA or RA duties. Students must sustain a 3.0 grade point average, and must meet benchmarks from yearly evaluations as well as fulfill the contract requirements of their RA/TAs if applicable. In the case of unsatisfactory progress, a list of achievable goals with deadlines will be provided to student. Failure to meet these goals will result in dismissal before the beginning of the next academic year. An appeals process exists in the case of academic dismissal.

7. Protocol for Grievances

Students may report and ask to have addressed any grievance (e.g. labor-related; harassment) experienced as a student at UD. If possible, an attempt can be made to resolve the grievance informally, either by speaking directly with the person with whom they have the grievance, or if they do not feel comfortable speaking to this person, the Graduate Director or the Department Chair.

8. Reporting Misconduct

a. [Research Misconduct Reporting](#)

The University of Delaware has the ethical responsibility to prevent misconduct in research, and the legal responsibility to inquire into all allegations of research misconduct, and to report and investigate all instances where a reasonable presumption of misconduct is established by inquiry. Ethics in research and how to report can be read at the site linked [here](#).

b. [Code of Conduct Reporting](#)

Graduate students are expected to uphold the standards outlined in the student code of conduct. The full code of conduct and how to report misconduct can be read at the site linked [here](#).

c. [Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Reporting](#)

Faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and others who work directly with students at UD are required by law (Mandatory Reporter) to report first-hand knowledge or disclosures of sexual assault and discrimination to the university's Title IX Coordinator and in the case of sexual assault, make an offer to notify law enforcement. These incidences are reported to the Office for [Equity and Inclusion](#).

9. Departmental Operations

Administrative: Current staff members are listed on the departmental web site at: [Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences](#). Office assignments, keys, mail, telephones, and the copy machine are handled by Department office staff.

Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences, University of Delaware

Graduate Program Policy Handbook

*revised June 18, 2021

Computing: All graduate students have office space and a desktop computer is provided to students in this office space. See CEOE-IT if you encounter difficulties with this computer. The computer lab in room 203 may be utilized by graduate students. Additionally, the department has access to high performance computing clusters on campus; contact the Department Chair or Graduate Director for access.

Graduate Student Representation in Department: A graduate student representative is present at all faculty meetings and is tasked with soliciting feedback and suggestions from the graduate students and reporting to the faculty. This representative is usually a PhD student who is in-residence. An alternate is appointed in the case that the student representative must be absent. Requests to be absent from the faculty meeting must be approved by the Department Chair. The Graduate Representative is a listening member and does not have a vote. The appointment is for one year.

The Graduate Representative is selected by a vote of the graduate students. The current Graduate Representative solicits interested candidates from the graduate student body from March 1 through March 14 during the spring semester. To be a candidate, a graduate student must have been in residence for at least one year. The Graduate Representative will then create an anonymous paper or electronic ballot with the eligible candidates by March 15. Votes are due by April 1. The Graduate Representative will count the ballots and report the results to the department. The student who receives the most votes is the Graduate Representative, and the candidate with the second-highest vote total is the Alternate. In the case where there is only one candidate, a volunteer for the position of Alternate will be solicited by the Graduate Representative and the Graduate Director.

When the department undergoes a faculty hire process, a graduate student is appointed by the hiring committee to participate in committee activities and solicit and report on graduate student feedback on the candidates. This appointment is separate from the Graduate Representative. The student search committee representative will have access to the files of short-listed candidates and will participate as a full member of the committee through the interview process. Graduate students provide important perspectives on new hires; however, the final selection of new hires rests with the faculty. Graduate students do not vote on faculty hires. The Graduate Representative will be a PhD candidate and will self-nominate with a short paragraph on why they should be selected (not more than 250 words) to the chair of the hiring committee after it has been formed. The hiring committee will evaluate the nominations and select the Representative by consensus.

Professional Development: All students are encouraged to take the graduate seminars in their field. As part of these seminars professional development topics will be discussed. Additional professional development opportunities are offered by CEOE and the Graduate College throughout the academic year.

Travel to professional meetings: Department funding for travel to professional meetings is modest and is offered to offset the cost of participating in meetings. To qualify for funding students must present their research in a regional forum (such as the Middle States Division of the AAG), a national meeting or workshop (such as the AAG, AMS, or AGU), or an international meeting or workshop (such as the EGU). Students should apply for funding from the Graduate College. The department will match funding from this award. Note that awards are limited to one per academic year and two awards during the course of graduate study. Funding for travel to conferences may also be available from research grants; students should consult with their primary advisor.

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Graduate Program Policy Handbook

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Winter and Summer Session Funding: There are limited opportunities to receive winter or summer session funding through teaching a class or working as a research assistant. The department determines which classes are offered in these sessions and will advertise for instructors in the fall and spring respectively. Applications will be reviewed by the Academic Council and an offer will be made on the basis of expertise, plan for the course, and seniority. Courses will only be run if they meet the minimum required enrollment. Offers for research assistantships over the summer typically come from the hiring faculty member. Other opportunities for funding can be found on the Graduate College Website.

Teaching resources and training: Teaching resources are available at the Center for Teaching and Learning at <https://ctal.udel.edu/>

Writing Center: The UD Graduate Student writing centers offers small-group and one-on-one writing consultations; see <https://www.writingcenter.udel.edu/for-graduate-students/graduate-student-writing-center>

Mentoring: All first year students are matched up with a peer-mentor through the CEOE EmPOWER Program. Empathic Peers Offering Wisdom, Encouragement, and Resources (EmPOWER). What the program provides: student-to-student mentoring for incoming graduate students, mentoring opportunities for more senior students, stress relieving events, and professional development seminars.

Counseling: Graduate students pay the student health fee, and so they are entitled to use the services offered by the Center for Counseling and Student Development. They offer individual and group counseling, and can also provide referrals to off-campus service providers. Call 302-831-2141 or visit <https://sites.udel.edu/counseling/>

Health insurance: Information is available at <https://grad.udel.edu/students/insurance/>

10. Appendix - Links to forms

In alphabetical order. Many of these forms can be found in the shared google drive “Graduate Program Resources (students).” This is not a comprehensive list and all students should consult the Graduate College website for official forms.

[Academic Intake](#)

[Course Substitution Form](#)

[Declaration of Thesis committee](#)

[Degree Completion check-list](#)

[Departmental Dissertation committee formalization](#)

[Dissertation committee formalization \(Grad College\)](#)

[Graduate Student Progress Report](#)

[MA/MS Thesis Defense Signature Page](#)

[Public Defense Announcement Form](#)

[TA Agreement](#)