

# Graduate Handbook

2025-2026

Department of Geography  
University of Oregon

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

This handbook provides a statement of requirements for graduate degrees in the Department of Geography, as well as explanations, advice and other information to help the student plan a rewarding graduate program. Please be aware that the UO Graduate Division has additional requirements and forms must be completed at various stages in the graduate program. The Grad Division requirements are ***not*** addressed in this Geography Graduate Handbook, but are provided at the Graduate Division web page.

Each graduate student follows an individualized program designed to help him or her develop competence in a field of specialization and familiarity with the scope of geography as a discipline. The advising committee works with the student to determine each student's specific program. While there are a number of fixed requirements, there are also many decisions to be made about each individualized program. These individual program decisions are initiated by the student, who should first explore fields of interest and then consult geography faculty (main adviser, other committee members and/or the Director of Graduate Studies) for further insights and guidance. Working with graduate students is one of the most rewarding parts of a faculty member's job, so faculty are usually willing and thoughtful contributors to planning students' programs (within the limits of the time they have available). The ultimate responsibility lies with the student, however, to ensure that the requirements and academic standards of the department and the Graduate Division are met.

The student should start to plan their program by reading the requirements, and other information relevant to the intended degree, contained in this handbook, and meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to plan the first quarter's courses and to ask questions about any requirements that are unclear. The student should consult with other faculty as needed about courses during the first year.

The following people can provide information and advice on specific parts of the graduate program and Geography Department operations:

***The Director of Graduate Studies*** handles advising at the start of student's program, including evaluation of student transcripts for geography breadth requirements. The Graduate Director provides general advice on degree requirements throughout the program, monitors progress of all graduate students, and certifies that requirements are met. The Graduate Director is the department representative who signs all Graduate Division forms unless the form specifies that the Department Head's signature is required.

**The Director of Graduate Employees** is in charge of appointment of graduate students to teach courses, in consultation with the Department Head and faculty.

**The Department Head**, in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies, is in charge of course planning.

**The Chair of the Graduate Admissions Committee** handles all questions concerning admission, including admission of Master's students to the Ph.D. program. This person is often, though not always, the Director of Graduate Studies.

**The Chair of the Graduate Scholarships and Awards Committee** handles applications and decisions about small research grants and travel grants from the department. They also handle applications for grant awards that require departmental approval or ranking, such as the SYLFF Fellowships.

**The Director of Summer Session** for the Department of Geography, in consultation with the department head and the faculty, decides what courses to offer in summer and who will teach them.

**The Graduate Coordinator in ASU5** maintains graduate records and handles paperwork required at various stages of the graduate program. They also handle records and paperwork concerning graduate admissions.

**ASU5 Staff** handle GE appointment paperwork and payroll. They have general responsibility for all functions of the department office, including policies concerning use of central office facilities.

Several other offices on campus provide information on some important topics that are outside the responsibility of the Department of Geography.

**The Graduate Division** is the official source of information on the UO Graduate Division degree requirements. The Graduate Division maintains a Graduate Funding Library that has information on fellowships, scholarships and research grants from external sources, and it also maintains a list of GE positions available from administrative offices and special programs.

**The Office of Student Financial Aid** has information on scholarships, student loans, work-study programs, etc.

**International Student and Scholar Services, in the Office of International Affairs**, assists international students attending the University of Oregon and U.S. students intending to study or do research abroad.

## II. GENERAL GRADUATE PROGRAM INFORMATION

This section and the following sections present the Department of Geography requirements for graduate degrees in geography. Some of the most important Graduate Division requirements are also presented here, but this is not intended to be a complete statement of Graduate Division requirements. Refer to the graduate studies section of the University of Oregon catalog, or contact the Graduate Division, for a complete statement of Graduate Division requirements. The student is responsible for ensuring compliance with Graduate Division requirements as well as those of the Department of Geography.

## ***Types of Graduate Degrees Offered by the Department of Geography***

**Doctoral degree:** The Department offers a research-oriented Doctor of Philosophy in Geography. Though students are usually admitted with a Master's degree, the department also admits students without a Master's degree directly into the PhD program.

**Master's degrees:** The research-oriented master's degree requires completion of a thesis that represents original research.

### ***Time for Completion of Graduate Degrees and Required Credits***

The master's program in geography is designed to be completed in two years of full-time study. Some students take longer than two years, but we encourage students to finish within two years if possible. Students whose undergraduate degree is in a field other than geography are more likely to take longer to complete the degree because they must take more courses to complete the geography breadth requirements. A few graduate students enroll as part-time students, but full-time enrollment is encouraged, especially during the first year.

The Ph.D. program in geography is designed to be completed in a minimum of three years of full-time study and research after completion of a geography master's degree with a thesis. Students entering the Ph.D. program with a master's degree in another discipline often take longer than three years. The actual time to completion of the Ph.D. may vary, depending on previous preparation in geography and in research skills necessary for a particular dissertation topic, logistics related to foreign fieldwork, etc. The residency requirement for the Ph.D. (a Graduate Division requirement) is a minimum of three consecutive terms of full-time study at the University of Oregon (for details see the Graduate Division web page or the graduate studies section of the University of Oregon Catalog).

For both the master's and the Ph. D. degrees, the Graduate Division requires that all work for the degree must be completed within seven years from the first term a student is admitted to the program.

Most students find that they have earned more than the minimum number of credits, and more than the minimum number of credits in geography, by the time they complete their graduate degree. In planning courses, the student should distinguish between credits and courses. Full-time enrollment means registering for a minimum of nine graduate credits per term (not counting GEOG 602). A typical course load is three substantive courses (four or five credits each) per term during the first year of study, and one to three substantive courses per term during the second year. In addition to the substantive courses, in many terms students also register for individualized courses such as GEOG 503, 601, 602, 603, 605, or 608. The student is expected to register for credits to represent faculty supervision of individualized study. For example, if a student is developing their thesis proposal, preparing for the comprehensive exam, or doing individualized study with a faculty member, that student is expected to register for GEOG 601 or 605 at a level that reflects the work a student is doing in a given term.

Most graduate students devote summer term to fieldwork or thesis research and writing, and they take few or no courses during the summer. A student may find it convenient to take language courses or other specific courses during summer term. Faculty members also devote their summers to research. In general, committee members will *not* be available during summer for official actions such as approving a thesis or dissertation proposal or giving a comprehensive exam. Plan to accomplish these milestones during fall, winter or spring term.

## ***Graduate Division Requirements***

The Graduate Division requires that students be enrolled continuously (summer terms excepted) until the degree is completed, unless the student has an approved leave of absence. If a student plans not to enroll for a term, they must apply to the Graduate Division for on-leave status.

The Graduate Division sets other requirements for a minimum number of credits, residency, deadlines for various steps and degree completion, and some other aspects of the graduate program. The Graduate Division has final authority over these requirements. More complete information on Graduate Division requirements can be found on the Graduate Division web page or in the graduate section of the University of Oregon catalog. Most of the requirements in this handbook are Department of Geography requirements. These are set and interpreted by the Department of Geography, particularly the Director of Graduate Studies.

## ***Course Numbering, Grades, and GPA***

Graduate credit is awarded for courses numbered in the 500s or 600s. **To receive a credit for graduate coursework, students must earn a B- or higher in graded courses, or a “Pass”, which is only awarded for a B- or higher. Geography graduate students are exempt from the Graduate Division’s rule of 24 graded credits.** In general, the Geography Department allows the student the choice of taking their graduate courses for grades or Pass/No Pass. Some students elect to take most courses as P/N, while others prefer grades. Consider the effects of these choices on applications for external funding, as having few or no letter grades could impact the evaluation of external applications. In some courses, the instructor may limit grading to either graded only or P/N only. The Graduate Division requires a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher to earn a graduate degree. See the Graduate Studies section of the University of Oregon catalog or ask the Graduate Division for other policies on grades and incompletes.

## ***Graduate Student Classification***

The Department of Geography admits to our graduate program (a) students intending only to earn the master’s degree, (b) students working toward a master’s degree who plan to continue for a doctoral degree, and (c) students with a master’s degree who are working toward a doctoral degree. We encourage well-qualified students in our master’s program to continue for the doctoral degree in our department, but admission to work toward a master’s degree does not ensure admission to work toward a doctoral degree. All students must complete a master’s degree, in geography or a related field, before admission to the doctoral program.

Student classification or student type is a data field that appears in one’s student record and on various forms that may need to be submitted. The relationship between the degree a student is pursuing and student classification is explained below.

***Master’s student (M, G8):*** Students without a master’s degree are generally placed in this classification, whether they aim to stop with the master’s degree or to continue for a Ph.D. in our program.

***Doctoral student (unconditional; D, G9):*** Students entering the doctoral program who have completed a master’s degree are generally admitted under this classification.

***Advancement to candidacy:*** This is not a formal student classification, but it represents a milestone in the doctoral student’s program. Advancement to candidacy occurs after the comprehensive exam has been passed.

### III. MASTER'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

#### Distinction between Master of Arts and Master of Science Degrees

The department awards both M.A. and M.S. degrees in geography. Generally, the student may decide whether to receive a M.A. or M.S. degree in geography. Competency in a foreign language is required to earn the Master of Arts degree. This is a Graduate Division requirement.

#### Credit and Residency Requirements

Each student must complete at least 45 graduate credits to earn a master's degree at the University of Oregon, of which the Graduate Division requires at least 9 credits for a thesis (GEOG 503). Each student must take a minimum of 30 credits applicable to degree requirements on the Eugene campus during at least two terms.

#### Course Requirements

**Core Course Requirements:** Students take the following courses during their first year in residence at the University of Oregon.

<b>Fall:</b>	GEOG 608: <i>Workshop in Thesis Writing</i> GEOG 611: <i>Theory and Practice of Geography</i>
<b>Winter:</b>	GEOG 612: <i>Current Trends in Geography</i> GEOG 595 or 597: <i>Quantitative or Qualitative Methods**</i>
<b>Spring:</b>	GEOG 608: <i>Workshop in Thesis Writing</i> and GEOG 613: <i>Research Design</i>

*\*\*Master's students are required to take **either** quantitative methods (GEOG 595 Data Analysis) or qualitative methods (GEOG 610 Qualitative Methods in Geography). If a student has taken advanced quantitative or qualitative methods at another university this requirement may be waived if approved by the Graduate Director.*

**Purpose:** To introduce students to the demands and challenges of graduate research, to acquaint students with major evolution and current status of theoretical and methodological debates in geography, and to have students develop and refine research questions as well as operationalize these questions in a thoughtfully designed research project.

**Geographic Breadth Requirement:** Graduate students need to complete three "breadth" course requirements unless a student has previously taken their equivalents at another institution. Students choose one 500 level course from each area of emphasis (physical geography, human geography, and spatial data science). In unusual cases where the student does not have the requisite skill set to take a 500-level course in the subfield at UO, they may take a 300-level course. In that case, students must be sure to enroll in *another* graduate level course to ensure they meet the minimum requirement for graduate credits taken at UO. It is also possible to satisfy the breadth requirement with intermediate or advanced classes at other institutions, including undergraduate classes at those levels.

*Purpose:* To ensure breadth of knowledge within the discipline by requiring students to take courses in different subfields of geography.

**Graduate Seminar Requirement:** Completion of a minimum of two graduate seminars (GEOG 607) from different faculty members. It is recommended that the student has completed some coursework in the field of the seminar before taking it. Students are encouraged to take additional seminars in their field of specialization, and may be required by their adviser and committee to do so.

One of the two 607 seminars is allowed to fulfill both a breadth requirement and the seminar requirement. If a 607 is used both for seminar and breadth requirement, then another 500 or 600 level course is needed.

Graduate seminars may not be substituted by a seminar from other departments except in the case of a shortfall in the number of GEOG 607 seminars offered in a given year. In this scenario, a seminar from another department that is approved as an exception must be announced to all graduate students. This does not guarantee that the instructor of a seminar in another department will admit all students if space is at capacity.

*Purpose:* To ensure that a student will gain experience in the process of defining a research question and preparing a substantial research paper.

**Thesis Workshop Requirement:** During the fall and spring quarters of each year prior to receipt of the Master's degree, each student must register for GEOG 608, a one-hour research workshop that meets regularly during the term. During each workshop meeting a student or faculty member gives a presentation on ongoing research, and participants are encouraged to offer comments and questions.

*Purpose:* To encourage students and faculty to share research issues and concerns with one another, and to provide students with a setting in which they are challenged to think critically about the work of others and to defend their own work in an environment of constructive criticism.

## **Other Master's Degree Requirements**

### ***Adviser and Thesis Committee Requirement***

The student must appoint a major adviser (committee chair) and a second faculty member to serve on the thesis committee, although some students choose to have three members serve on their master's committee (one chair and two secondary members). The student identifies appropriate faculty members to serve as the major adviser and second committee member and then asks these faculty members to serve on the thesis committee. Both committee members must be members of the Geography Department. Membership of the committee should be designed to include those faculty members whose teaching and research specializations are closest to the student's intended research focus, and those faculty with expertise in the research skills appropriate for that research focus. Faculty members have the option of declining to serve if they feel they cannot adequately advise the student on the intended thesis topic, or if their schedule does not allow them to serve. When the committee members accept, the student fills out a master's "Adviser Declaration Form," gathers the appropriate signatures and turns it into the grad coordinator.

For some students with a very well-defined set of research interests, it may be clear from the outset who could potentially serve as the student's major adviser. However, for some master's students this may be less clear given connections to the research specializations of more than one faculty member. For those

in the latter situation, we encourage the student to use fall quarter to meet and interact with various faculty before making a decision about who the student would like to serve as their major adviser. It is important to start working on this process immediately by taking courses with potential advisers and/or meeting with them to talk about the student's research interests and their approach to advising. We also organize fall term meetings between the new student group and faculty members to facilitate this process.

Because of the relatively short timeline for completing a master's degree, master's students need to declare the major adviser of their committee by the end of fall quarter of their first year. If the student feels unable to finalize that decision by that time, the student must schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss advising options and plans. There may be legitimate reasons why the student cannot designate a chair by the end of fall quarter, but these need to be discussed with the Director of Graduate Studies. If necessary, students can change advisers later by submitting a revised Adviser Declaration Form.

*Purpose:* To establish a formal relationship with selected faculty who will be the student's primary advisers in selecting courses and in the preparation of the master's thesis.

### ***Progress Meetings Requirement***

The thesis committee will meet as a group with the student at least once a year (including the first year) to discuss the progress of the student's program and thesis. Typically these progress meetings should be held in Winter term, though Spring is acceptable for MA/MS students in their first year if the advisor agrees.

For specific information see *Annual Progress Meetings*. It is the student's responsibility to fill out and bring their Graduate Student Progress Workbook to the progress meeting.

During or before the first progress meeting, the committee may recommend courses and seminars that are related to the student's field of specialization within geography, or help develop specific skills (e.g., foreign languages or computer programming). In some cases, this will include courses from other departments.

*Purpose:* To provide the student advice on preparation for the thesis (coursework and other research preparation), and guidance on the selection of the thesis topic and development of the thesis.

### ***Thesis Proposal Requirement***

Approval of a short research proposal by the thesis committee and the Graduate Studies Director by the end of the student's third quarter in the master's program. With permission of the thesis committee, this deadline may be extended by one quarter. The proposal should include the elements listed below under Sample Outline. It should be no more than four pages, double-spaced, not including the bibliography and figures. If it is necessary to change the scope of the project at a later date, the thesis committee will decide whether a new proposal is needed. Failure to present an approved proposal by the end of the fourth quarter in residence will be deemed to constitute unsatisfactory progress toward the master's degree. Students in this situation may be suspended from the program. They may be reinstated upon petition accompanied by a research proposal that is acceptable to the thesis committee.

*Purpose:* To define the research topic and approach in the first year, so that the student can identify and begin research during the summer.

Sample outline for master's thesis proposal:

1. *Tentative thesis title, author, date of proposal*
2. *Statement of problem:* What are the research questions? Why are these questions significant?
3. *Objectives and procedures:* What do you plan to do? How will you go about collecting information and analyzing it, i.e. what is your research plan? What is your study area (if relevant) and why is it an appropriate study area?
4. *Funding:* What are the costs of the project? What sources of funding are being or will be pursued?
5. *Work plan and schedule:* What are the steps involved in completing the project? How long will each step take you and when will it be accomplished? What is your anticipated completion date?
6. *References cited*

### ***Thesis Requirement***

A thesis approved by the thesis committee and completion of at least nine credits of thesis (GEOG 503). When submitted to the Graduate Division, the thesis must conform to the *University of Oregon Style and Policy Manual for Theses and Dissertations* (available from the Graduate Division and on their web page).

*Purpose:* To introduce students to the process of preparing a substantial piece of research on a geographical subject and to allow the student to develop significant expertise on that subject.

### ***Thesis Presentation Requirement***

Oral presentation of the master's thesis at a public lecture. This is commonly a presentation in the department, but other venues may be used if approved by the thesis adviser.

*Purpose:* Requires students to explain their work and its significance in a fashion that is understandable to a general audience, and requires students to synthesize and articulate what they have accomplished. Also familiarizes others in the department with the work of the student and the scope of a master's thesis. If an oral presentation cannot be scheduled during the term of thesis completion, the student can still receive the degree, but will be asked to give an oral presentation during the following term.

The student is responsible for the presentation at a suitable time for the committee. The venue should be Condon Room 106 or a nearby lecture or seminar room that can accommodate 25 people or more. The ASU staff can help determine which rooms are available.

Three weeks before the presentation, the student is responsible for circulating a public announcement of their presentation title, date, time, and location to the department graduate students and faculty. This should include an Outlook calendar invite that contains all of this information, so any necessary changes can be easily recorded. If the student plans a hybrid Zoom presentation, the URL should also be included.

### ***Graduate Division Requirements***

See the Graduate Division web page or the graduate studies section of the UO Catalog.

## IV. DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### Credit and Residency Requirements

To graduate with a Ph.D. in Geography, students must have at least three years of full time graduate enrollment (81 credits) beyond the Bachelor's degree, and must take the classes required by the department and the thesis committee, as outlined below. The total number of credits required to receive the Ph.D. will vary with student background and the research topic. Each student must take at least 18 hours of dissertation (GEOG 603) after advancement to candidacy.

Three consecutive terms of full-time enrollment on the Eugene campus are required. Full-time enrollment means a minimum of nine graduate credits in substantive courses completed each term. Summers may be considered an exception from the three consecutive terms rule. For students continuing from the geography master's program directly into the geography Ph.D. program with no break in enrollment, the Ph.D. residency requirement may have been met during the master's program. The residency requirement is a Graduate Division requirement, and any questions about this requirement should be directed to the Graduate Division.

*Purpose:* The residency requirement is intended to ensure at least one year in which the student concentrates exclusively on coursework and research, and experiences in-depth contact with faculty and students in geography. The residence year is intended to include substantive coursework in geography, although individualized research credits may be completed as well.

### Course Requirements

**Core Course Requirements:** During their first year of study at the University of Oregon, doctoral students must complete the fall, winter and spring sequence of courses listed under the master's degree requirements—e.g. GEOG 608, 611, 612, 613 (Research Design) and one methodology course\*\* (see section III). Beyond this first-year core also required of M.A. students, before advancing to candidacy Ph.D. students are required to have completed the 'other' methods course not already completed, either qualitative methods (GEOG 597 or approved equivalent) or quantitative methods (GEOG 595 or approved equivalent). Any substitution of core geography course requirements must be made with prior authorization of the Director of Graduate Studies. With the advice and consent of their doctoral committee, students have the option of substituting a third seminar for one of the two methods courses required.

*\*\*As noted in the master's degree requirements, if a student completed an advanced methodology course at another university prior to arriving at UO, the requirement of taking a methodology course during the first year can be waived.*

**Geographic Breadth Requirement:** Completion of a master's degree in geography or equivalent study that includes courses required for the M.A. or M.S. degree in geography at the University of Oregon, plus one additional course not in the student's area of specialization.

**Graduate Seminar Requirement:** Completion of a minimum of two graduate seminars (GEOG 607) from different faculty members. It is recommended that the student has completed some coursework in the field of the seminar before taking it. Students are encouraged to take additional seminars in their field of specialization, and may be required to do so by their adviser and committee.

One of the two 607 seminars is allowed to fulfill both a breadth requirement and the seminar requirement. If a 607 is used both for seminar and breadth requirement, then another 500 or 600 level course is needed.

Graduate seminars may not be substituted by a seminar from other departments except in the case of a shortfall in the number of GEOG 607 seminars offered in a given year. In this scenario, a seminar from another department that is approved as an exception must be announced to all graduate students. This does not guarantee that the instructor of a seminar in another department will admit all students if space is at capacity.

*Purpose:* To ensure that a student will gain experience in the process of defining a research question and preparing a substantial research paper.

***Research Workshop Requirement:*** During the fall and spring quarters of each year prior to receipt of the doctoral degree, each student must register for GEOG 608, a one-hour research workshop that meets regularly during the term.

*Purpose:* To encourage students and faculty to share research issues and concerns with one another, and to provide students with a setting in which they are challenged to think critically about the work of others and to defend their own work in an environment of constructive criticism.

## **Other Ph.D. Requirements**

### ***Dissertation Adviser and Advising Committee Requirement***

Appointing and establishing a relationship with a committee of advisers is one of the most crucial steps in navigating the doctoral program. It must be done carefully, yet in a timely manner. The dissertation committee will ultimately consist of four to five faculty members, three of whom must be affiliated with the UO Geography Department (see next paragraph for rare exceptions). At least one member of the dissertation committee must be a faculty member from outside of the Geography Department. This so-called 'institutional representative' should be someone whose work is related to the student's dissertation interests and with whom the student has had substantial contact. In most instances the institutional representative is not formally appointed until after the comprehensive exam process, although the institutional representative can participate in comprehensive exams if the institutional representative wishes.

The chair of the dissertation committee is the primary adviser helping the doctoral student navigate the program and guiding the completion of the student's dissertation, and must be a member of the UO Geography Department Faculty (that includes faculty with joint appointments in Geography). For some students with a very well-defined set of research interests, a likely potential advisor may be clear from the outset. However, for a number of doctoral students new to the program this may be less clear given the likelihood of having connections to more than one faculty member. For those in the latter situation, we encourage doctoral students to take one to two quarters to meet and interact with various faculties before making a decision about who should serve as the dissertation chair. It is important for doctoral students to start working on this process immediately by taking courses with potential advisers and/or meeting with them to talk about the student's research interests and their approach to advising. We also organize fall meetings between new students and all department faculty members, to help facilitate interaction between graduate students and department faculty.

Students must formally ask faculty if they are willing to serve as chair or as another member of their advising committee. Faculty members have the option of declining to serve if they feel they cannot adequately advise the student on the intended research focus, or if their schedule does not allow them to serve. Once a faculty member has agreed to chair the student's advising committee, the student needs to fill out an "Adviser declaration form" available from the Grad Coordinator, which requires a signature from the designated faculty adviser. This adviser declaration form can be turned in as early as the start of classes in fall quarter, but for many students it is important to take courses and meet a variety of faculty before making a final decision. If the student has not formally declared a primary adviser by week 8 of winter quarter, the student will need to make an appointment with the Grad Studies Director to discuss the options and plans regarding an advising committee. This requirement is designed to keep students on track and offer support for making this important decision.

The four core members of the dissertation committee must hold appointments at the level of Assistant Professor or higher (tenure-related) at University of Oregon. Membership of the committee should be designed to include those faculty members whose teaching and research specializations are closest to the student's intended research focus and faculty with expertise in the research skills appropriate for that research focus. A dissertation committee may include an additional member beyond the four core members. The fifth member could include other UO faculty, faculty at other universities and other researchers with a Ph.D. These additional members are people who contribute some particular expertise to the topic of the dissertation and are willing to provide advice to the candidate. The full committee must be formally appointed by the Graduate Division within a short time after the comprehensive exam has been completed.

The composition of the student's dissertation committee may change over time, particularly if the student's interests shift. Most PhD students establish a solid relationship with two to three faculty members (one as chair) during their first year, and the committee continues to build as the student's research interests become more focused. It is important to have a solid committee of three Geography faculty members at least six months in advance of taking comprehensive exams, and to be ready to formally appoint an institutional representative after those exams are complete. If a non-Geography member of the graduate faculty is in a position to provide particularly valuable substantive and/or methodological guidance on a student's doctoral dissertation project, that person can replace one of the three Geography faculty members of the committee, with the approval of the committee chair and the Director of Graduate Studies. There are times when a student asks to change the composition of their committee, usually due to shifting research interests. It is of utmost importance that such changes be made in a professional manner with attention to clear communication with everyone involved. For changes of "core" committee members the student must consult with their primary adviser before making any changes. If a student wants to change their primary adviser / dissertation chair, the student must fill out a "Change of Doctoral Adviser" form (available with the Grad Coordinator), which requires the signature of the Grad Director and all affected parties. No changes can be made without proper notification of all parties involved.

*Purpose:* The dissertation adviser and other Geography faculty on the committee supervise the doctoral student's coursework and progress, participate in the comprehensive exam process and help the student develop their dissertation research. The institutional representative, who usually becomes involved after the comprehensive exams, also provides substantive advice in the student's dissertation project and is the institutional representative of the process for the UO Graduate Division.

### ***Progress Meetings Requirement***

A meeting between the student and the entire geography faculty on his or her advising committee will be held at least once each academic year, including the student's first year in the Ph.D. program, to discuss the student's progress. For specific information, see *Annual Progress Meetings*. It is the student's responsibility to fill out and bring their Graduate Student Progress Workbook to the progress meeting, which is housed in the Geography Department office.

During or before the first progress meeting, the committee may recommend courses and seminars that are related to the student's field of specialization within geography, or help develop specific skills (e.g., foreign languages or computer programming). In some cases, this will include courses from other departments.

*Purpose:* To ensure regular contact between student and committee, to allow for regular input on a student's research so as to head off problems before they become major and to provide students with a forum in which they are required to demonstrate some kind of progress each year.

### ***Comprehensive Exam Requirement***

Doctoral students must pass a comprehensive examination in order to obtain the status of Ph.D. candidate. Students are expected to take their comprehensive examination within two to three years of commencing the doctoral program. (See section on *Procedure for Comprehensive Exam* below.) Geographic core courses, breadth requirements, and seminars must be completed before the comprehensive exam is taken. A comprehensive exam committee consisting of three core faculty members administers the exam (see Dissertation Adviser and Advising Committee Requirement). If a student fails a comprehensive examination, he or she may take a new examination with a start date no later than six months after a decision has been communicated on the first examination. Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam the second time will be dismissed from the program. For more information, see *The Comprehensive Exam*.

*Purpose:* Ensures that students have significant breadth and depth in the discipline prior to admission to doctoral candidacy, as well as experience in framing questions and answering them in an analytically rigorous fashion. Requiring that the comprehensive exam is taken after course requirements have been met ensures that the student can be admitted to doctoral candidacy immediately after passing the comprehensive exam. It also ensures that students undertake the comprehensive exam with background in defining research questions and preparing research papers, and with sufficient skills to open up a broader range of sources or methodologies in answering questions.

### ***Dissertation Proposal and Defense Requirement***

Doctoral students complete and defend their dissertation proposal within nine months of completion of the comprehensive exam. In many instances students finish and defend the proposal much *earlier* than this departmental deadline. Each student should consult with their committee about the appropriate timing for completing and defending the dissertation proposal. It is often strategic to time the formal dissertation proposal defense *before* large funding applications are due, as the defense process can strengthen those funding proposals considerably.

The dissertation proposal should state and explain the following elements: the research question or questions, how these questions are related to previous published research literature, the significance of

the questions, and a methodology appropriate to the research problem. The document must be in one of the following forms: (a) a written dissertation proposal with the elements listed above (10-15 pages in length, minimum 1.5 spacing) or (b) a grant application equivalent to a proposal for an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant or Research Fulbright.

The student must circulate the complete proposal at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. During the defense, students make a short summary presentation approximately 10-15 minutes, and then listen and respond to comments and questions from their committee members. A final, revised version of the proposal (revised in response to the questions and comments from the committee) should be turned in no later than one month after the proposal defense. A one-page abstract of the proposal should be circulated to the department faculty.

The dissertation proposal defense can be scheduled as part of/in lieu of an annual progress meeting, if the timing is appropriate. Otherwise, the proposal defense should be scheduled at a time when all committee members, including any outside committee members, are available. Students cannot expect to schedule proposal defenses during breaks between quarters, or during the summer. Failure to submit an approved dissertation proposal within nine months of the completion of the comprehensive exam will be deemed to constitute unsatisfactory progress toward the degree. Students in this situation may be suspended from the program. They may be reinstated upon petition accompanied by a dissertation proposal that is acceptable to the dissertation committee.

*Purpose:* To promote well-focused research by encouraging students to articulate and justify their research question, and to encourage students to compete for research funding as appropriate.

### ***Dissertation Requirement***

Completion of a dissertation presenting the results of research of a substantive and original nature on a significant geographic problem. There are two options for the form of the dissertation, the monograph, or a series of articles. See the Graduate Division for requirements related to the article form of the dissertation. The dissertation must be presented and defended at a public meeting in the department and approved by the dissertation committee. For more information, see *Procedures for Completion of Ph.D. Program*.

*Purpose:* To provide students with the experience of preparing and justifying a substantial piece of original research on a geographical subject and to allow the student to develop significant expertise on that subject. The presentation requirement ensures that students are able to explain their work and its significance in a fashion that is understandable to a general audience, and to respond to the questions raised about their work.

### ***Graduate Division Requirements***

See the Graduate Division web page or the graduate studies section of the UO Catalog.

## The Comprehensive Exam

**Preparing For Comprehensive Exams:** Preparation for comprehensive exams occurs through courses and seminars beginning in the first year of the graduate program. Students should plan coursework to develop adequate theoretical, methodological and substantive breadth for the comprehensive exams. Ideally, coursework would include at least one course from each faculty member on the comps committee. Timing of the comps should be planned so that the student has completed all Geography Department and Graduate Division requirements for advancement to candidacy by the time the student finishes comps. Comps are normally taken during fall, winter or spring terms; comps may be taken during summer only with strong justification and with the agreement of each committee member.

**Objectives of the Comprehensive Exam:** The comprehensive exam process is designed to test the breadth and depth of the student's training at the doctoral level in Geography. The scope of the student's comprehensive exams should be considerably broader than the scope of the student's dissertation, or a typical graduate seminar. The comprehensive exam is an opportunity to demonstrate that the student (a) can articulate core areas of expertise and situate the student's overall research agenda in relation to these areas of expertise; (b) understands and can defend major theoretical and methodological issues in these core areas; and (c) has a sense of where those theories and methods stand in relation to major themes in contemporary and interdisciplinary scholarship.

The exam committee will look for evidence that the student has the background and ability to speak intelligently to geographers and other specialists with similar interests; to explain the relationship between the student's area of expertise and other academic fields; and to draw on internalized knowledge to make clear, well-reasoned arguments about important geographical issues and ideas. Answers to comprehensive exam questions should not be merely descriptive literature reviews. Instead, the student should develop a point-of-view or perspective in reference to the relevant literature.

The comprehensive examination process consists of four steps, described in detail below:

1. **Development of Fields, Reading Lists, and Questions:** The student identifies three fields within Geography in which they situate their core research and teaching interests; develops a set of readings for each field that they take responsibility for knowing, and writes at least six questions that address their three areas of expertise;
2. **Kick-off Meeting:** The student meets with the committee and explains the rationale for their areas of expertise and questions, and answers clarifying questions from the committee. The committee then selects three questions, which the committee may choose to edit.
3. **Written Exam:** The student writes responses to the three questions selected by the committee in a 3-day closed-book exam.
4. **Oral Exam:** The student defends their answers and addresses deficiencies in their answers with their committee.

**Timeline:** The student should plan out, in advance, the schedule for the comprehensive exam and ensure that it fits the availability of the committee members and the student.

- The **development of three fields** should begin two quarters before the written and oral exams. This should be based on the areas of expertise identified in a progress meeting the year before comps are taken.

- By no later than one quarter before the exams, the student should **compose reading lists for these fields and craft their questions**.
- The **Kick-off Meeting** is a one hour meeting, ideally scheduled three days before the student will begin the Written Exam. It must occur no more than seven days prior to the writing period and no later than two days prior to the writing period.
- The **Written Exam** period is three (3) days. During these days, the student is on-campus from 9am to 5pm to take the exam. Ideally, the Written Exam days are consecutive, although those three days may occur across an entire seven-day period depending on the availability of the student and their GE schedule. The Exam Period must be scheduled in consultation with administrative support staff to ensure that a staff person is available to admit the student to the room. The student should reduce all professional obligations as much as possible for this time; students with GE appointments should coordinate with their supervisor to ensure coverage and minimal disruption to the GE work.
- The **Oral Exam** is a two hour meeting which should take place one week (7 days) following the last Written Exam day, and must occur no more than 2 weeks following the last Written Exam day.

Extensions to the timing of any of the components can only be made in the case of an exceptional and unexpected personal emergency, and only with the consent of the entire examination committee. Faculty members are not expected to be available during summer session or term breaks for Kick-off meetings, reading Written Exam answers, or attending the Oral Exam.

The student must be enrolled during the term in which the comprehensive exam is taken and the term it is completed. Usually, advancement to candidacy is effective at the start of the term *following* the term in which the comprehensive exam is completed. The date of advancement to candidacy may be important, to meet conditions of a fellowship. Students should plan the comprehensive exam schedule well in advance, allowing plenty of time for completion.

## Examination Components and Steps

**Reading List & Question Development:** The student creates a reading list and develops their own questions in consultation with their committee members. Readings and questions should focus on the three areas of expertise as identified in consultation between the student and advisor, and other members of the committee as appropriate. Reading lists are designed to guide the student through their question development and will serve as the primary basis for answering those questions during the Written Exam.

Students are advised to carefully consider and demonstrate, “Who am I, as a geographer?” Although these areas will be linked to the dissertation project at some level, the readings and questions should reflect the *breadth* of the student’s training and should not be framed narrowly. *Specific areas of expertise should be identified and agreed upon during a progress meeting prior to the comprehensive exam year, at a time when the entire committee can have input into these choices. Depending on the student’s progress, conversations about these areas of expertise could begin as early as the first year of the doctoral program, so that coursework can be identified and completed around those areas of desired expertise.*

Students will develop at **least six (6) questions with at least two (2) questions focused within each of the three areas**. The committee may ask the student to develop more than six total questions throughout the Question Development process. The committee will ultimately select three of these questions for the student to answer in the Written Exam.

The questions should not be designed to initiate purely a content-based answer. Nor should the questions result in simply an expanded annotated bibliography. Instead, the student should strive to develop questions that are themselves creative and original and will result in correspondingly creative and original answers. These questions should interrogate and synthesize current debates in theory, new methods, and/or ontologies, as examples.

Once the advisor and student have agreed upon the questions, the student distributes the questions to the committee at least three (3) business days prior to the Kick-off Meeting.

**Kick-off Meeting:** During this one (1) hour meeting the student provides a short (~10 minute) overview of their comprehensive exam questions, during which they can touch briefly on its relationship to their dissertation project and overall research agenda. During a Q&A period, committee members have an opportunity to engage the student in an exploratory discussion of their designated areas of expertise and research agenda. Students may also be asked to share their views on which questions are their favorite and which they are most excited to answer, or which questions are their least favorite.

The student then leaves the room and the committee identifies three (3) questions to pose to the student for the exam. The committee should assure that the questions cover adequately all research areas identified by the student, and that they solicit student engagement with a range of theoretical, substantive, and methodological concerns. During this time, the committee may constrain, clarify, or edit any of the student-written questions.

Upon reaching consensus, the chair of the committee then shares the questions with the grad coordinator staff who will then administer the Written Exam.

**Written Exam:** The three (3) day written exam takes place in a room coordinated through the grad coordinator staff. The room contains a desktop computer that is not connected to the internet, with only Microsoft Word and Open Office installed. No phones or other technologies are allowed in the room. Students may bring in their reading list and it will also be provided in digital form on the computer. Blank paper and writing implements are permitted.

Each day the student will be provided one of the questions selected by the committee on a USB stick. The student has up to 6 hours to write a response, with an additional 30 minutes allowed for lunch. Students can take breaks at any point and leave the room for up to 15 minutes at a time, but students are expected to maintain integrity and honesty and come back to the room without materials.

Responses should be no longer than 3,000 words, and can be much shorter as long as the student is able to thoroughly answer the question. Students may sketch/draw labelled figures on paper and submit to the ASU staff to be included with their answers. Students are expected to cite their work from their reading list in text; however, students should not feel constrained to only use their reading list if another citation comes to mind that is helpful for answering a question. Complete/correct in-text citations beyond the reading list are not expected. A list of references is not required.

At the end of each day's writing period, the student saves their answer on the computer and the USB stick provided, and the graduate coordinator staff emails the answer and photos of any hand-drawn materials to the committee and the student.

**Oral Exam:** No more than two weeks after the completion of the Written Exam, the student will defend the responses orally in a two-hour meeting. The first 90 minutes consist of an oral exam in which the

student may be asked to discuss the general character of their answers, clarify or amplify points made, justify the approach taken, address relevant issues not included in the answers, and/or respond to arguments that oppose the positions adopted.

**Exam outcomes:** During the last 30 minutes of the Oral Exam meeting, the committee will ask the student to leave and, in a closed session, will evaluate the student's performance. The committee will grade each answer as acceptable, marginal, or as unacceptable, according to the following criteria in the following section.

### Exam Assessment

- **Acceptable:** 1) The written answer is clearly written and acceptable to the committee; or 2) Any significant weaknesses or gaps in the answer were addressed in the Oral Exam, and the committee is convinced that the student adequately understands the literature, issues and concepts, and you have the knowledge to correct those weaknesses.
- **Marginal:** The majority of the written answer was fundamentally acceptable, but there were some significant gaps or errors. After questioning in the oral exam, there remain some deficiencies.
- **Unacceptable:** The written answer has major gaps or errors in literature covered or interpretation of the issues and concepts, and these gaps and errors were not overcome in the oral answers to the satisfaction of the committee.

From the evaluation of each of the three answers, there are three outcomes of the comprehensive exam: pass, fail, or conditional decision.

- **Pass:** all answers categorized by the committee as acceptable.
- **Fail:** two or more questions are deemed unacceptable, or *all* answers are marginal.
- **Conditional Pass:** Any other combination of acceptable / marginal / or unacceptable for the three responses. These are handled as detailed below:

**Conditional Pass Marginal answers** will require the committee to create a short prompt designed to specifically address the deficiency in the marginal response. Students will schedule up to three (3) hours per marginal response to write a response. They will be given the prompt by the ASU staff at the beginning of the writing period, following all other protocols of the Written Exam. This must occur within two (2) weeks of the Oral Exam and can happen as soon as one (1) day after the Oral Exam. The committee will decide asynchronously whether the student has sufficiently addressed the deficiency within two (2) weeks of the submission of the response(s).

**Conditional Pass with Unacceptable answers** will require the student to schedule a repeat of answering the same question with the same protocol as the Written Exam, during which the student composes a new answer to the same question. This must occur within two (2) weeks of the Oral Exam and can happen as soon as one (1) day after the Oral Exam. The students will then have to schedule a 1-hour repeat Oral Exam with the committee where they will defend their written answer.

Following the protocol for unacceptable and marginal answers, the student's responses must all be deemed acceptable for the student to pass the exam. Even if the exam is passed, the committee may determine that there are some deficiencies that need to be addressed by additional coursework or reading. Under these circumstances, advancement to candidacy will be delayed until the additional requirement has been met.

**Retaking in case of an initial “fail”:** A student who fails the exam will be given one opportunity to retake it within six months of the first Oral Exam following all of the procedures listed above. If a student does not succeed in passing the exam a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program.

## **Procedures for Completion of the Ph.D. Program**

Most of the rules for completion of the Ph. D. program are Graduate Division rules rather than departmental rules.

**Continuous Enrollment, Leave Status and Deadline:** Graduate students must attend the University continuously (except summers) until all requirements are completed, unless a student is “on leave.” Following the advancement to candidacy only a single year “on leave” is allowed. A student must maintain registration of three graduate credit hours or have on leave status. The year’s residency on the Eugene campus, the passing of the comprehensive examination, and completion of dissertation must all be accomplished within a seven-year period.

**Advancement to Candidacy:** A student is advanced to candidacy when that student has completed all required courses, the residency requirement, and the comprehensive exam. The Graduate Studies Director reviews the student’s file to determine whether all requirements have been met, and the Grad School also reviews it before approving advancement. Advancement to candidacy is expected to occur within three weeks after completion of the comprehensive examination. The student and the main adviser should ensure, through the Graduate Coordinator, that the necessary paperwork is completed. The student must be registered for credits at University of Oregon during the term of advancement. Appointment of the dissertation committee, acceptance of the dissertation proposal, completion of required dissertation credits (GEOG 603), and completion of the dissertation all occur after advancement to candidacy.

**After Advancement:** The members of the dissertation committee should be registered in Grad Web. The composition of the dissertation committee may be the same as the comprehensive exam committee, plus the institutional representative. The major adviser is usually recommended to be dissertation committee chair. This should be done within one month after advancement and no later than six months before completion of the dissertation. The institutional representative must belong to a department that offers a Ph.D. or be on an approved list of the Graduate Division. If the recommended members are approved, the Graduate Division then sends each member a formal notice of appointment. After advancement to candidacy, the student must complete a minimum of eighteen credit hours in GEOG 603.

**Dissertation Proposal Presentation:** Students in the doctoral program must complete and present their dissertation proposal no more than nine months after completion of the comprehensive exam. In many instances students finish and defend the proposal much *earlier* than this institutional deadline, the student should consult with their committee about the appropriate timing for completing and defending the dissertation proposal. The dissertation proposal defense can be scheduled as part of / in lieu of the annual progress meeting, if the timing is appropriate. Otherwise, the proposal defense should be scheduled at a time when all committee members, including any outside committee members, are available. Students cannot expect to schedule proposal defenses during breaks between quarters, or during the summer. Detailed guidelines for the proposal and defense can be found on page 16.

**Draft Dissertation:** The student provides the dissertation committee chair, and often other committee members, copies of the dissertation in draft form as the work progresses. The student should consult with each member of the committee to determine when and in what order the member prefers to read dissertation chapters. In most cases, a dissertation goes through three or four drafts, with the committee chair and members making comments and suggestions for revision. Committee members will commonly require several weeks to complete reading of a draft chapter. Before completion, the dissertation must conform to the *University of Oregon Style and Policy Manual for Theses and Dissertations* (available from the Graduate Division and on their web page).

**Dissertation Defense:** The Graduate Division requires that a formal, public defense takes place on campus at a date set by the committee chair and the Graduate Division. This requirement is met in the Geography Department by the following steps. The student should see the Graduate Program Director with any questions. See also the Graduate Division's web page on *Doctoral Degree Policies and Procedures*.

**Timing Issues:** Ordinarily, no dissertations will be read during summer quarter. The student should have the dissertation completely written, and graphics and maps designed, before applying for the degree. Only preparation of the final copy for presentation at the defense should remain during the term in which application for degree has been made with the registrar. The student should determine whether all committee members will be in residence during the term in which the defense is planned.

**Two or Three Months before the Defense:** The date and the location of the defense are selected with approval of the dissertation committee chair and the Graduate Division. The defense should be scheduled for a departmental seminar time or a time that is equally suitable for public presentation. The venue should be Condon Room 106 or a nearby lecture or seminar room that can accommodate 25 people or more. The ASU staff can help determine which rooms are available.

**Three Weeks before the Defense:**

- The student submits the final draft copy of the dissertation to each dissertation committee member for review. After the committee has read the manuscript, usually some final revisions are required. If major revisions are required, the committee can request the defense be postponed until a future time. The committee members may provide written or oral suggestions for revision of the defense draft either before or at the dissertation defense. Failure to give the committee the full manuscript three weeks ahead may result in the postponement of the public defense.
- The dissertation committee chair approves the dissertation title and abstract and four copies are filed with the Graduate Division. At this time the Application for Final Oral Defense and the Confirmation to Attend the Final Oral Defense must be submitted to the Graduate Division.
- The student is responsible for circulating a public announcement of their defense title, date, time, and location to the department graduate students and faculty. This should include an Outlook calendar invite that contains all of this information, so any necessary changes can be easily recorded. If the student plans a hybrid Zoom presentation, the URL should also be included.

**One Week before the Defense:** A copy of the final dissertation manuscript is available for public examination in the Geography Office.

**Defense Format:** The candidate presents the main objectives and findings of the dissertation in a 30-minute public presentation. Following this presentation, members of the dissertation committee question the candidate on the research and related topics. The public is then allowed to ask questions. The question session generally lasts about an hour. At the dissertation committee's discretion, it can then meet in a closed session with the candidate to ask additional questions.

The committee meets privately after the defense to decide whether the candidate has passed. Notification of the results of the dissertation defense (Certificate of Completion of Graduate Work for Doctoral Degree) must be filed with the Graduate Division no later than two weeks after the defense. If no signed approval is received within two weeks of the oral defense another oral defense must be scheduled to defend the dissertation. Following final approval, two copies of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate Division.

## **V. JOINT GRADUATE DEGREES IN GEOGRAPHY AND ANOTHER DEPARTMENT**

The Department of Geography welcomes graduate students in related fields to consider a graduate program combining geography with another discipline. In the past, graduate students in related natural science, social science and professional programs at the University of Oregon have done strong academic work in geography and have contributed to the Department of Geography through participation in courses, as research assistants, and as Graduate Employees. Programs that allow students to combine graduate study in geography with another discipline are described briefly below.

### ***Master's Degree in an Interdisciplinary Program with a Geography Department Adviser***

Geography faculty frequently serve as advisers to students in interdisciplinary programs such as Environmental Studies, Asian Studies, Russian and East European Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies (through the Graduate Division), and Global Studies. In such cases, the student is admitted to and enrolled in one of these programs, and the graduate requirements of that program apply.

### ***Second (Concurrent) Master's Degree in Geography***

This option applies if the student was initially admitted to another graduate program at the University of Oregon, and decides to do a concurrent master's degree in geography. Geography is considered a second master's degree. The following steps should be followed if completing a second master's degree in geography. (If the student was admitted first as a master's student in geography, and wishes to do a second concurrent master's degree in another program, the second program decides what is required for the second master's beyond the geography requirements.)

**Admission to Geography:** Apply to the Department of Geography Graduate Admissions Committee for admission to the geography master's program. The student should apply for admission as early in the first master's program as possible, so that the Geography Department can provide advice on the student's course plan. Early admission will ensure that the courses selected will meet the geography degree requirements. Applications received after the Geography Department's usual application deadline will be considered only on a space available basis.

To apply, first obtain a copy of the Graduate Division form *Filing for Concurrent Master's Degrees*, and also read the Department of Geography master's degree requirements. The student should submit to Geography their transcripts, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, a statement of professional interests (including a brief description of the intended thesis project), and a proposed course plan. The geography section of the course plan should show how the student proposes to fulfill the geography master's degree requirements, including geographical breadth, core courses, seminars, and foreign language (if needed). Some of the geography master's degree requirements (breadth requirements) may have been met through undergraduate courses, or other courses taken prior to enrollment at University of Oregon. The course plan should also show how the student will fulfill the Graduate Division requirements, including number of credits, graded credits, and 600-level credits. As the student proceeds in their program, modifications to the geography course plan will be allowed with the approval of the Geography Graduate Studies Director. Any exceptions to meeting the geography master's degree requirements must be approved by the department faculty as a whole.

If the student is doing a master's thesis for their first program (and registering for thesis credits in that program), and if the topic and form of the thesis is acceptable to the student's geography adviser, the requirement for registration in geography thesis credits is waived. Nine thesis credits as required by the Graduate Division should be taken in the first program; additional research credits in geography should be taken to represent the input of the student's geography adviser. The geography adviser should be involved in the planning and completion of the master's thesis. If no thesis is being done for the non-geography major, the student must complete a thesis for the geography degree. In this case, it may be more efficient to select geography as the first major and take all of the thesis credits in geography.

### ***Ph.D. in Environmental Science, Studies and Policy (ESSP) with Geography as the Focal Department***

**Admission:** The ESSP Ph.D. degree is offered by the Environmental Studies Program. Students apply to the Environmental Studies program. The application is forwarded by Environmental Studies to the Geography Department for review. For admission, the admissions committees of both the Environmental Studies program and the Department of Geography must approve the application. The student should consult both environmental studies and geography faculty while preparing the application.

**Degree requirements:** The ESSP program sets most of the requirements for this degree. If geography is the focal department, the student's major adviser will be a geography faculty member. Geography focal department requirements are: (a) completion of GEOG 611, 612 and 613 (Research Design); (b) completion of two graduate seminars in geography (GEOG 607) given by different faculty members; and (c) preparation in the student's specialization and related skills, by completion of a group of courses and seminars recommended by the student's adviser and other committee members. ESSP-Geography doctoral students are also advised to take GEOG 608s and 630s, attend departmental seminar talks, and participate in activities of the Geography Department in other appropriate ways. Students in ESSP program with Geography as their focal department may substitute the equivalent research design class in the ESSP curriculum for GEOG 613.

### ***Interdepartmental Ph.D. Program with Geography as the Second Major***

In this program, the student is working toward one Ph.D. degree with two majors. Both majors must be in programs authorized to award the Ph.D. at the University of Oregon. This is a challenging program because the student must meet all requirements for the Ph.D. in each major. If a student is interested in this option, obtain specific information on the rules governing this program from the Graduate Division.

**Admission:** After admission to one regular departmental doctoral degree program and successful completion of one year of coursework in this department, the student needs to apply to the Department of Geography admissions committee. As part of the application the student will need to submit to Geography his/her transcripts, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, a statement of professional interests (including a brief description of the intended dissertation project), and a proposed course plan. If the geography application is accepted, the student may then apply to the Graduate Division for permission to work toward a Ph.D. degree in more than one major. See the Graduate Division for details on this application.

**Degree requirements:** The Graduate Division sets the general requirements for this degree. Coursework in geography must meet all requirements for the Ph.D. in geography. Each student must have an interdepartmental advisory committee that includes at least two geography faculty members. This committee administers the comprehensive exam and the oral defense, and approves the dissertation.

## **VI. ANNUAL PROGRESS MEETINGS**

### ***Basic Requirement***

Each student will have an annual progress meeting with their advisory committee each year during winter or spring term. The purposes of the annual progress meeting are to ensure that: (a) at least once a year the committee is informed of the student's progress to date and plans for the coming year; (b) the committee members share their thoughts on the student's program and give the student consistent guidance; (c) the coursework is adequate to prepare the student for thesis research and (for doctoral students) their comprehensive exams; and (d) an appropriate rate of progress on coursework requirements and thesis research is being made.

**Timing of the Meeting:** Students in their second year or later have their progress meetings between the second and ninth weeks of winter term. First year students have their progress meetings between the second and ninth weeks of spring term. To avoid the absence of a committee member, the meeting may be held earlier, or (rarely) later. The student is usually not expected to hold an annual progress meeting if (a) the student is well into the writing stage of the thesis and is within a term of completing it, or (b) the student is taking the comprehensive exam during the term of annual progress meetings. Students planning to be on leave during the term of annual progress meetings should have a progress meeting before they go on leave. If a student thinks they fall into one of these categories, consult the Graduate Studies Director to see if the annual progress meeting requirement can be waived that year.

**Attendance at the Meeting:** The meeting is attended by the student and the Geography Department members of the advisory committee. Outside committee members are welcome but their attendance is not required. If a committee member is on sabbatical or unavailable for an extended period (i.e. one month or longer), the major adviser may choose to hold the meeting without her or him. In most cases, the student should send a statement of coursework and research progress to the absent member in advance, so that she/he can provide written input to the student and the other committee members. Progress meetings should be planned well in advance to avoid conflicts with shorter absences of committee members. For example, progress meetings can be held earlier than normal to accommodate travel schedules of committee members.

First-year students should have formed their committee before scheduling a progress meeting. The student should notify the Graduate Coordinator who their committee members are before the progress meeting. A student may change the composition of the committee later if their thesis plans develop in a different direction.

### ***Planning for the Meeting***

**Scheduling:** Each faculty member will provide her/his schedule of availability for the progress meeting period to the Department office at the beginning of winter and spring terms. Faculty members typically identify several blocks of time each week during which they are available for progress meetings. Each student should examine the schedules of their committee members, select a common time, and reserve this time on the faculty schedule sheets. The student must contact each committee member to confirm availability for the selected time. The progress meeting must be scheduled by the end of the second week of winter term for second-year students or above, or by the end of the second week of spring term for first-year students.

### ***Topics to be covered:***

- **Progress in coursework requirements:** Discuss courses already completed and the student's plans for completing the remaining requirements. Discussion of coursework should include not only geographic breadth requirements but also coursework for research preparation.
- **Thesis or dissertation research:** Discuss a statement of the research problem, research questions, approaches and methods, progress to date, and plans for the next year. Also plan to discuss the draft proposal if it has not yet been approved. Seek faculty advice on fieldwork logistics, funding, etc. Pre-comps doctoral students should discuss plans for comps.

**Student's Preparation for the Meeting:** Prepare a statement of coursework and research progress that consists of two or more short handouts for committee members. It is usually most effective if these can be read by the committee members at the meeting, and are used by the student to help communicate their progress. The student should complete the Progress Workbook (a digital file), including completed courses and courses the student intends to take in the near future to complete requirements. The student should be prepared to explain to committee members how and when remaining requirements will be met. For thesis/dissertation progress, the form will vary depending on the stage of the research project. If a proposal has not yet been approved, most committee members expect to see a draft proposal or a brief description of the student's research. If a doctoral student has not yet taken comps, a discussion of the comprehensive exam and identified areas of expertise should be a topic of conversation at the progress meeting. Any lengthy proposals will need to be circulated to committee members a week or so before the meeting, so that the committee can provide useful feedback.

### ***Outcome of the Meeting***

The committee members will provide advice on coursework plans, thesis/dissertation idea(s) and, if relevant, comprehensive exam plans. The student may get approval on their thesis proposal or on the timing and areas expertise for the comps, for example. The student should end up with clear priorities for the next year – this will make work more productive and relations with the committee more positive. Within one week of the progress meeting, the student should upload a new dated version of this workbook through the Sharepoint form. This includes a short summary of the meeting. This summary should particularly highlight the things the committee recommends the student do going forward. The student's major adviser must review and approve the Workbook submission made by the student, and may add notes as necessary.

## **VII. SATISFACTORY PROGRESS AND PLANNING THE GRADUATE PROGRAM**

This section contains a definition of satisfactory progress toward degree completion, as well as advice on general strategies to ensure that a student's graduate studies are successful, rewarding and enjoyable. A graduate degree is not earned simply through coursework. Because research is required, the student will need to do significant preparation and self-study outside of courses. The intent of this section is to help students decide how to arrange their course of study and other activities, and which courses should be taken early in the program. In planning courses and other aspects of the graduate program, be sure to talk with faculty, including the Director of Graduate Studies.

### ***Criteria for Satisfactory Progress for the Master's Degree***

#### ***By the end of the first year:***

- Core course requirement completed
- Geographic breadth requirements completed, except that students entering without a previous degree in geography may complete the last two courses during their second year
- At least two courses in field of specialization coursework completed
- Thesis proposal completed and thesis committee appointed

#### ***By the end of the second year:***

- Geographic breadth requirement completed
- Two graduate seminars (GEOG 507 or 607) completed
- Complete the thesis (and nine credits of GEOG 503), or make substantial progress on analysis and begin writing

### ***Criteria for Satisfactory Progress for Doctoral Students with a Masters in Geography from the University of Oregon***

#### ***By the end of the first year:***

- At least two graduate seminars in geography (GEOG 607) completed
- Course work and seminars to be used for the comprehensive exam completed

#### ***By the end of the second year:***

- Comprehensive exams completed
- Dissertation proposal defended

### ***Criteria for Satisfactory Progress for Doctoral Students with a Master's Degree from Another University or in Another Discipline***

#### ***By the end of the first year:***

- Core course requirement completed

- Geographic breadth requirements completed, except that students entering without a previous degree in geography may complete the last two courses during their second year
- Coursework and seminars in the fields to be used for the comprehensive exam completed

***By the end of the second year:***

- At least two graduate seminar (GEOG 507 or 607 at University of Oregon) completed
- Comprehensive exam completed.
- Dissertation proposal completed and approved

***By the end of the third year:***

- Dissertation research (18 credits in GEOG 603) completed

***Additional Criteria for Satisfactory Progress all Graduate Students in Geography***

- A grade of B- or Pass must be achieved for all courses required for the graduate degree.
- At any one time, a student shall have no more than three incompletes, except for thesis or dissertation credit.
- Each student is responsible for seeing that the requirements of the Graduate Division are met and should make sure that necessary committees have been appointed and that proper forms have been filed on time.
- Each graduate student is expected to participate substantially in non-credit departmental activities such as colloquium/seminars, field trips, and specially scheduled lectures.
- Each graduate student should make sure that all variations from the satisfactory criteria listed above are approved by the Graduate Studies Director and recorded in the student's file.
- Graduate employee (GE) appointments for instruction or research will be maintained when possible only for students who follow this time table. For master's candidates, GE appointments will not extend beyond the second year. Ph.D. students may receive no more than three years of GE appointment. Exceptions to these time limits can be made by the Department Head in unusual circumstances or to meet specific needs of the Geography Department. Unusual circumstances will not be defined ahead of time.

***Recommended Additional Goals for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Master's and Ph.D. Students***

Students should:

- Start to become familiar with the research literature in their intended areas of expertise by reading beyond specific course assignments in research journals and books. Students should read to become familiar with current research questions, theory, and research methods.
- Participate in GEOG 631 to 633 courses according to their own research interests, when they are offered.
- Master's students should form their committee and have their thesis proposal accepted by the end of spring term.
- Take courses in methods and techniques (qualitative methods, quantitative methods, GIS, etc.) relevant to their field early, so that this knowledge can be used in designing the thesis or dissertation project. Don't put off quantitative or qualitative methods until after field work, for example. Masters students should take these courses in their first year.
- For Ph.D. students, identify the general focus of research specialization, and recruit a major adviser and at least one other committee member by the end of winter term. Develop a plan for

the comprehensive exam (date, committee members, areas of expertise) by the end of spring term.

- Note that all graduate students will have their first progress meeting in winter or spring term of their first year.
- Plan for making progress on research (fieldwork, reconnaissance, language training, data collection, etc.) during the summer after the first year.
- Become acquainted with the breadth of geography and with department members outside of the student's areas of interest by participating in colloquium.

### **General Advice**

- Graduate seminars are the most important courses in the graduate program. Students should take all the seminars offered by their primary adviser, and at least one from each committee member, during their graduate program.
- Coursework outside of geography is beneficial to many geographic specialties. Doctoral students in particular are encouraged to take coursework outside of Geography, including seminars if possible. Selection of outside coursework should be made with input from the major adviser.
- Students aiming for a career involving teaching in higher education should include time in their programs to develop teaching skills, through courses, workshops offered by the Teaching Enhancement Program, or other means.
- In some cases, it may be appropriate to audit a course rather than taking it for credit. The student must always get the instructor's permission before auditing a course. The instructor may want to limit the course to students who will participate fully.
- Avoid getting incompletes in Graduate Division. Because graduate courses are more demanding than undergraduate courses, it is difficult to recover from incompletes. Incompletes are given only at the discretion of the instructor.
- Avoid taking GEOG 605 in place of an established 500-level course. The Graduate Division expects that a significant majority of graduate coursework that is taken to meet Geography course requirements will consist of established courses.
- At several stages during and after the graduate program, a student will need to ask faculty members to write letters of recommendation. Writing a detailed effective letter of recommendation takes time and concentration. Be considerate of faculty members. Give them plenty of time (at least two weeks' notice before the deadline). Students should provide them complete information for the letter, including the name and address, deadline, and information on the job or award.

## **VIII. DEPARTMENT RESOURCES AND POLICIES**

**Office Hours:** The department office is open from 8:00 until 12:00 noon and from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Activities involving the department office (copying, picking up mail, etc.) should be done during open office hours.

**Copy machine:** Use of the department copier is limited to class materials (classes for which a student is working as a GE, not classes a graduate student is enrolled in) and grant related copying approved by a grant supervisor. Please use double sided when feasible. Please **plan ahead** as the copier is in high demand. Large jobs should go to Printing Services, which usually has about a 24-hour turnaround time.

**Supplies:** The department furnishes supplies related to teaching or assisting with classes. Letterhead stationery and envelopes are available for departmental business.

### ***Mail Services***

**Campus mail:** Pick-up and delivery is at about 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. each day. For campus mail, use campus mailers kept near the mailboxes. Cross off the previous name and department before addressing (check both sides). Address by using the person's name and their department. In most cases, office numbers are unnecessary and confusing. Outgoing campus mail is collected in the wooden tray at the end of the counter in 107 Condon or it may be dropped in the white box outside Room 104 Condon. Shuttle mail between UO and Oregon State University, Portland State University, and Salem (government offices) should be addressed with a complete address, including zip code, and marked SHUTTLE where the stamp would normally go. It goes out with the campus mail.

**US mail and delivery services:** U. S. mail is delivered and picked up once a day (anywhere between 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.). All outgoing mailings need to be charged to an account. If a student needs to send an item that is grant related the department secretary can provide assistance. Stamped mail will not be picked up but may be taken to the U.S. mail drop box located at customer service in the Duck Store.

### ***Computers***

If students use lab and office computers and other computer resources and facilities within the Geography Department each student must adhere to professional computing standards and ethics while using its resources and facilities. Refer to the University of Oregon *Acceptable Use Policy* from the Office of Information Services for rules on appropriate use of computing resources at the University of Oregon.

Unauthorized use of the network, unauthorized use of others files, copying software, and using the network to break a system are considered violations of professional standards and ethics in computing. Installing software, viewing pornography, game playing, abusing equipment, and other actions deemed unacceptable are not tolerated. Computer users may not install their own software into the computers without prior written approval of the department head. Geography department software must never be copied. This is a violation of copyright law.

Contact the Geography Department computer support technicians for help with department computing resources.

## **IX. GRADUATE EMPLOYEE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (GDRS)**

This document is provided to Graduate Teaching Fellows at orientation. Copies are available from the Graduate Coordinator upon request.