

THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Beginning the Program

Students who have been admitted to the program will receive a variety of mailings from the Department and the Graduate School with information about dates for orientation sessions, payroll authorizations, payroll periods, health insurance, course registration, and other issues. Students are responsible for responding to all Department and University requests for information or action in a timely manner. They are also responsible for being present for required orientation sessions. Funded students must be present as of the first date of the payroll period.

Students who were admitted while completing a master's or other degree must provide the Graduate School with an official transcript documenting that the degree was completed.

Students are required to participate in university orientation sessions for new students and in the Department orientation. The Department orientation is held each semester during the week before classes begin for all new and continuing graduate students in residence. At this time, assistantship assignments and room assignments are made and other pertinent information is discussed.

International students are also required to participate in the University orientation for new international students. The Department must ensure that each graduate student has appropriate oral proficiency in English before the student is employed as a teaching assistant, instructor, or lecturer with direct responsibilities in either classroom or laboratory settings. Certification of English proficiency is filed with the Graduate School and made a part of the student's record. According to the University's English language policy, **the student** is responsible for obtaining certification in a timely fashion. The **academic unit (department)** is responsible for reviewing the certification in the records administration system before employing the student in an instructional role. This certification may be obtained by meeting one of the following requirements:

1. The student speaks English as a first language.
2. The student submits a Test of Spoken English (TSE) score of 50 or higher.
3. The student participates in the International Teaching Assistants Program (ITAP) workshop for international students held prior to each semester and passes the PhonePass SET – 10 test. If a student does not receive a passing recommendation, (s)he may not be appointed to a position with direct instructional contact and must complete an appropriate ITA course before being retested.

The Graduate Coordinator may serve as advisor to first-time doctoral students and assists students in scheduling their first semester of course work.

Advisory Committee

We recommend students select a major advisor no later than the end of the first semester of study in the Ph.D. program. We recommend students form advisory committees no later than the end of the second semester of study in the Ph.D. program. We recommend 4 person advisory committees, because the examining committee must have at least 5 people.

The Graduate School requires that the major advisor and at least one associate advisor must be on the Graduate Faculty for the Geography field of study. We require that at least two associate advisors must be members of the Graduate Faculty for the Geography field of study. The fourth member of the committee (the **outside member**) will be from outside the Geography Department (either a member of the graduate faculty in another field of study or a faculty member at another university) but not more than one member from another University will be appointed.

We recommend advisory committee members be faculty with which the student has done course work, because the advisory committee is the main component of the examining committee for the general examination and dissertation defense. When a graduate student changes major advisor, (s)he must notify the Graduate School using a standardized form signed by the new major advisor. Duplicate forms are sent to the Department Head, graduate program director, and former advisor.

When a graduate student changes other members of the advisory committee, the graduate student and major advisor must notify the Graduate School (see www.grad.uconn.edu for links to forms) so that records can be updated. This can be done electronically, but the Department Head and Graduate Program Coordinator should also receive copies of this notification electronically.

Other Committees

Students will also have to form an Examining Committee of at least 5 people. The Examining Committee has 1 external member. The **external member** is not necessarily someone from outside the Department; the external member of the examination committee is someone who is not a member of the advisory committee.

Students will also have their dissertation proposals reviewed and approved by another group of faculty as outlined below.

Required Courses

Required course work for the PhD consists of a methodological core, a substantive core, elective course work, and teaching preparation (37 credits beyond the M.A.) and course work in a related area (6 credits). This course work will generally be completed in five semesters.

The **methodological core** (17 credits) includes one course each in GIS, spatial statistics, research design, and the development of geographic thought.

1. GEOG 301 Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems, Fall Semester, 3 credits
2. (A) GEOG 342 Spatial Data Analysis, Fall Semester, 3 credits; (B) GEOG 343; or (C) students may substitute GEOG 242 and GEOG 333 to complete this requirement.
3. GEOG 311 Research Design, Spring Semester, 3 credits
4. GEOG 413 Themes in Geographic Thought, Spring Semester Every Other Year, 3 credits
5. GEOG 325 Geography Proseminar, Fall Semester, 1 credit
In this seminar, faculty members make presentations to the graduate students so that all students have an opportunity to meet all faculty members, not just those with whom the students are taking courses or assisting, so that graduate student advisory committees can be formed in a timely fashion.

The **substantive core** (6 credits) includes 400-level Geography courses **not** including GEOG 413 or GEOG 415. These seminar courses are generally offered once every other year.

The **elective course work** (12 credits) includes additional graduate-level course work in Geography.

The **teaching preparation** (1 credit) includes the one-credit practicum course GEOG 415, taken with a faculty member who has regular teaching responsibilities in the course area. Students are expected to have completed the practicum before they are scheduled to teach the course with full responsibility. Students may repeat the course and count up to 3 credits of GEOG 415 on their plans of study.

The **related course work** (6 credits) includes course work from a related field outside the Department.

The plan of study must include all of the required courses for the graduate degree program. Required courses cannot be waived. Students who wish to make substitutions for a required course must have the written approval of their committee first. The major advisor and student must also seek approval from the instructor of the course. The written approval and the written advice from the course instructor must then be submitted to the Geography Department graduate faculty for approval and the substitution will be permitted only upon approval by a simple majority of the Department's graduate faculty.

Students who have completed the MA in the Geography Department at the University of Connecticut will have completed a number of courses in the methodological core to satisfy their master's requirements. These students may attach a note to the plan of study for the PhD degree stating that the courses were taken during the MA program to confirm that the requirements were satisfied and then substitute elective course work to achieve the necessary total credits on the plan of study.

Residence Requirement

Graduate students can fulfill the special demands of a doctoral program only by devoting a continuous period of time to concentrated study and research. During the second or subsequent years of graduate work, at least two consecutive semesters must be completed in residence through registration for and completion of appropriate full-time course loads. For Geography students, this will occur at the Storrs campus. This period of residency must be noted on the student's plan of study.

Plan of Study

The plan of study must be fully approved before the student can take the general examination. The advisory committee signs the plan of study. It must be formally approved by the Graduate School. The plan of study shows all required and elective courses that are being presented by the student to fulfill the degree requirements. The end of the fourth semester or the beginning of the fifth semester is the recommended time for filing the plan of study. The advisory committee signs the plan of study. It must be formally approved by the Graduate School.

At least 15 credits of GRAD 495 must appear on the plan of study. We have a related coursework requirement, but **not** a foreign language requirement. The student must also indicate the semesters that satisfied the residency requirement. Students holding graduate assistantships are not considered employees of the University for the purposes of completing the section on University employees on the PhD plan of study.

Not more than 6 credits of 200 level course work not open to sophomores may be included on the plan of study. Course work listed on the plan of study must have been completed within the appropriate time limit for completing the PhD program and any courses taken on a non-degree basis at the University of Connecticut or at another institution must meet requirements for inclusion on the plan of study.

Plan of study forms are available at the Graduate School web site www.grad.uconn.edu.

General Examination

The general examination is under the jurisdiction of the student's advisory committee. We recommend the written component first, with at least part closed book. The oral examination is scheduled to be within a reasonable time period of the conclusion of the written (usually within a week). We expect students to pass the written examination before they take the oral examination.

An Examining Committee of not fewer than five faculty members, including all members of the student's advisory committee, must participate in the examination. All examiners are invited to submit questions and to evaluate answers, but the final decision as to whether or not the student has passed the examination rests solely with the members of the advisory committee.

After the examination, the major advisor communicates the results to the candidate and immediately sends the official report signed by each member of the committee to the Graduate School.

Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Review Committee

Students must file a dissertation proposal no more than 10 pages in length with the Graduate School. We recommend that students develop a dissertation topic with their advisory committee beginning in the first year and no later than the third semester of coursework. If the committee wishes the student to develop a lengthier proposal, that is acceptable. However, we recommend that the 10-page dissertation proposal for the Graduate School be ready for submission and review within 1 to 3 months of successful completion of the general examination.

Students and their advisory committees are responsible for making sure that the dissertation research as proposed and conducted complies with all University requirements for conducting research, including Human Subjects review. The University's Office of Sponsored Programs provides information on these requirements and students should consult with appropriate program officer.

The proposal must be reviewed and approved by the Department. The approval must accompany the submission of the dissertation proposal to the Graduate School. The Graduate School provides several options for this. We recommend an oral presentation by the student to the Advisory Committee and two other reviewers. At least one reviewer must be from outside the Geography Graduate Faculty and not on the Advisory or Examining Committee. The two reviewers are appointed by the Department Head who must also sign the approval form. The reviewers should be able to assess the scholarly merit of the proposal.

The Dissertation Proposal with approval form is available at the Graduate School web site at www.grad.uconn.edu.

Candidacy and Dissertation Preparation

Once a student has passed the general examination and has submitted an approved dissertation proposal, (s)he is admitted to candidacy and writes the dissertation. The advisory committee sets a date for completion within the time limits for completing the PhD degree.

Students on graduate assistantships receive an immediate increase in pay upon admission to candidacy.

Students become eligible to receive up to \$1,000 of travel support from the Graduate School upon admission to candidacy.

The Dissertation

Specifications for the dissertation are available at the Graduate School web site at www.grad.uconn.edu.

Continuous Registration

Doctoral students must begin their programs with course work and must maintain registration continuously each semester thereafter (except summer sessions) until all requirements for the degree have been completed. Registration may be maintained either by taking course work for credit or by registering for a non-credit Continuing Registration course GRAD 499.

Final Examination (Dissertation Defense)

The dissertation defense is under the jurisdiction of the advisory committee. It deals mainly with the subject matter of the dissertation. The examination may not be held sooner than seven days after a working copy of the complete dissertation and tentative advisory committee approval have been submitted to the Graduate School. The Tentative Approval Form is available at the Graduate School web site.

Not fewer than five faculty members must attend the dissertation defense. All members of the advisory committee must attend the defense. Invitation to participate in the examination is made by the advisory committee, but any member of the faculty may attend.

The oral defense of the dissertation must be announced to the Department and to the University. The announcement form must be submitted electronically to the University Calendar for publication there and in the UConn Advance at least two full weeks prior to the date of the defense. Instructions for posting the date, time, and place are provided at the Graduate School's web site at www.grad.uconn.edu.

The decision whether the candidate has passed, conditionally passed, or failed the examination rests solely with the advisory committee. The vote of the committee must be unanimous. Following the examination, the major advisor communicates the results to the student and verifies that the official report has been completed and signed by members of the committee for submission to the Graduate School.

Dissertation, Abstract, Microfilming, and Other Completion Requirements

Following the examination, the student must submit the final, fully-revised copies of the dissertation to the Graduate School. Final approval of the dissertation following the examination is indicated by the presence of original signatures of all members of the advisory committee on the final approval pages.

At the time the dissertation is filed with the Graduate School, four copies of the abstract, not exceeding 350 words in length, must be submitted to the Graduate School. Microfilming of the dissertation is required. The student is required to pay the fee for microfilming and the fee for copyrighting the dissertation. There is no charge to the student for binding of the two copies of the dissertation that will become the property of the Homer Babbidge Library. The student is responsible for paying for binding of any additional bound copies.

Time Limits

The equivalent of at least three years of full-time study beyond the baccalaureate or two years beyond the master's degree in the same or closely related field is required. All work must be completed within eight years of the beginning of doctoral study, or if the student entered with a master's degree in the same or a closely related field, the doctorate must be completed within seven years. The beginning of doctoral study is defined as the beginning date of the earliest course, wherever taken, listed on the approved doctoral plan of study.

The general examination must be passed within five years of the beginning of doctoral study or within four years if the student entered with a master's degree in the same or a closely related field.

Failure to complete the work within the periods specified or failure to maintain continuous registration will require reevaluation of the student's entire program and may result in a notice of termination.

Conferral

Degree conferral requires that the student is in good academic standing and that all requirements for the degree have been completed satisfactorily on or before the last day of the conferral period. Degrees are conferred three times each year, in August, December, and May, although there is only one graduate commencement ceremony held in May at which graduate degrees are awarded. Students receive their diplomas by mail normally within three months following conferral.

Application for Degree Conferral

At the beginning of the semester when the student expects to finish all requirements for the degree, the student must file an application for degree conferral. Procedures for completing this task are available through the Graduate School web site. If this filing is not completed in a timely fashion, conferral will be delayed to the next period, even though all degree requirements have been completed.

Concluding Department Business

Students are expected to remove their belongings from Department offices and other spaces, leave their workspaces in a clean condition, and return all keys to the Administrative Assistant in a timely fashion. They should also remove files from the Department server.

Students should leave a forwarding address and other contact information with the Administrative Assistant so that the Department can provide our alumni with information about the program.