

## **THE MASTER'S 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 bachelor's 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. International students are also required to participate in the University orientation for new international students. 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.

The Graduate Coordinator serves as advisor to most first-time master's 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 M.A. program. Students should form advisory committees no later than the end of the second semester of study in the M.A. program, before the student has completed 12 credits. The committee must include at least two associate advisors. It is also possible to have four people. We recommend advisory committee members be faculty with which the student has done course work. The major advisor must be on the Graduate School's list of Graduate Faculty for the Geography field of study. At least one of the other advisors must be a member of the Graduate Faculty of the University. We recommend at least 2 advisory committee members from the Geography Department (the major advisor and one other).

When a graduate student changes major advisor, (s)he must notify the Graduate School using a standardized form (see [www.grad.uconn.edu](http://www.grad.uconn.edu) for links to forms) 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 so the records can be updated. This can be done electronically, but the Department Head and Graduate Program Director should also receive copies of this notification electronically.

## Required Courses

There are four required courses for the master's program in Geography:

1. GEOG 5500 Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems, Fall Semester, 3 credits
2. (A) GEOG 5600 Spatial Data Analysis, Fall Semester, 3 credits; (B) GEOG 5610; or (C) students may substitute GEOG 3500Q and GEOG 5100 to complete this requirement.
3. GEOG 5000 Research Design, Spring Semester, 3 credits
4. GEOG 5010 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 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.

## Plan of Study

The plan of study must be fully approved before the student can become a candidate for the M.A. 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 second semester or the beginning of the third 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. Not more than 6 credits of 3000/4000-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 six-year time limit for completing the M.A. 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.

There are different Plan of Study forms for Plan A (Thesis) and Plan B (Non-thesis) students. Plan A students must complete at least 24 credits exclusive of GRAD courses. At least 9 credits of GRAD 5950 must appear on the plan of study.

Students who are not shown in the Graduate School's records as Plan A students will not be able to register for GRAD 5950 credits. If a student has difficulty registering, (s)he should contact the Graduate School to make sure their records show the student as Plan A.

Plan B students must complete at least 30 credits exclusive of GRAD courses, pass an examination, and conduct and write a paper about a research project.

Plan of Study forms are available at the Graduate School web site [www.grad.uconn.edu](http://www.grad.uconn.edu).

### **The Master's Thesis**

Specifications for the thesis are available at the Graduate School web site at [www.grad.uconn.edu](http://www.grad.uconn.edu).

### **Final Examination**

Near the close of the candidate's period of study, within a year of the completion of course work or thesis, the student must pass a final examination under the jurisdiction of the advisory committee. The examination cannot be taken before the plan of study has been approved and the student has attained Regular status (some students are admitted to the MA program on provisional status but will have attained Regular status shortly after admission; students on graduate assistantships must have attained Regular status).

We require an oral examination for Plan A students. The oral defense of the thesis must be announced to the Department. Any and all members of the faculty may attend. The decision whether a student has passed or failed rests solely with the advisory committee. The vote of the committee must be unanimous.

We require a written and an oral examination for Plan B students. The decision whether a student has passed or failed rests solely with the advisory committee. The committee must file a report of the results of the final examination. All members of the advisory committee must be present and must sign the forms.

### **Continuous Registration**

Master's 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 5999.

### **Time Limits**

Ordinarily, the master's degree should be completed within two years (four semesters). All work for the master's degree must be completed within a maximum period of six years from the beginning of the earliest course, wherever taken, listed on the approved plan of study. Failure to complete the work within this period or failure to maintain continuous registration will require re-evaluation of the student's entire program and may result in termination of the program.

**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.