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# DGES GRADUATE PROGRAM GUIDE



COLLEGE OF ATMOSPHERIC AND GEOGRAPHIC SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY  
*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA*

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## Table of Contents

<b>1. OVERVIEW OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	4
2.2 APPLICATION DEADLINES.....	4
2.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION .....	4
2.4 APPLICATION PROCESS FOR NEW STUDENTS.....	5
2.5 CURRENT DGES STUDENTS WHO WISH TO CHANGE THEIR PROGRAM.....	5
2.6 DECISION-MAKING .....	6
<b>3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING</b> .....	<b>6</b>
3.1 OVERVIEW OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING.....	6
3.2 GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS (GRAS).....	6
3.3 GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS (GTAs) .....	7
3.4 SERVING AS INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD .....	7
3.5 HOLDING A GTA OR GRA APPOINTMENTS ABOVE 0.5.....	7
3.6 CONTINUED FUNDING BEYOND INITIAL CONTRACT .....	7
3.7 SUMMER FUNDING.....	8
<b>4. RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
4.1 THE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS .....	8
4.2 RESOURCES FOR FINDING HOUSING.....	8
4.3 TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR INCOMING STUDENTS.....	9
4.4 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES.....	9
4.5 OU GRADUATE COLLEGE AND GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE.....	9
4.6 FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH, TRAVEL AND PUBLISHING.....	9
4.7 DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS .....	10
4.8 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING .....	10
4.9 EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE .....	10
4.10 HOW TO REPORT INSTANCES OF BIAS, HARASSMENT, MISCONDUCT, OR ASSAULT .....	10
<b>5. EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
5.1 EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS.....	11
5.2 EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS.....	11
5.2.1 <i>Types of GTA appointments</i> .....	11
5.2.2 <i>Expectations for effort</i> .....	12
5.2.3 <i>Student mental health</i> .....	13
5.2.4 <i>Other GTA policies</i> .....	13
5.2.5 <i>Resources for GTAs</i> .....	14
5.3 EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS .....	14
5.4 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY .....	15
<b>6. DGES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b> .....	<b>15</b>
6.1 OFFICE SPACE, KEYS, TRAVEL CARDS AND OTHER RESOURCES .....	15
<b>7. ANNUAL EVALUATIONS</b> .....	<b>16</b>
7.1 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS .....	16
7.2 SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS .....	16
7.3 ACADEMIC WARNING OR DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM.....	16
7.4 ENROLLMENT STOP .....	16
7.5 DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM .....	17
<b>8. MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>17</b>

8.1	TIMELINE AND KEY MILESTONES.....	17
8.2	COURSEWORK .....	17
8.3	FORMING YOUR THESIS COMMITTEE.....	18
8.4	REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS.....	18
8.5	THESIS PROPOSAL.....	19
8.6	COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FOR NON-THESIS STUDENTS .....	19
8.6	SUBMITTING PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION .....	19
8.7	FINAL STEPS: THESIS DEFENSE AND COMPLETING YOUR THESIS .....	19
<b>9.</b>	<b>DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>20</b>
9.1	TIMELINE AND KEY MILESTONES.....	20
9.2	COURSEWORK .....	20
9.3	FORMING YOUR DISSERTATION COMMITTEE .....	20
9.4	REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS.....	21
9.5	DISSERTATION PROPOSAL .....	21
9.6	GENERAL EXAM .....	21
9.7	SUBMITTING PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION .....	22
9.8	FINAL STEPS: DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND COMPLETING YOUR DISSERTATION.....	23
<b>10.</b>	<b>COMPLETING YOUR THESIS OR DISSERTATION .....</b>	<b>23</b>
10.1	SCHEDULING YOUR DEFENSE .....	23
10.2	SHARING YOUR THESIS OR DISSERTATION WITH YOUR COMMITTEE AND DGES .....	24
10.3	HOLDING THE DEFENSE .....	25
10.4	DEPOSITING YOUR FINAL THESIS OR DISSERTATION WITH SHAREOK .....	25
<b>11.</b>	<b>APPENDIX A: TIMELINE FOR THE MASTERS PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>APPENDIX B: TIMELINE FOR THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>13:</b>	<b>APPENDIX C: CHANGING VARIABLE CREDIT COURSE HOURS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>APPENDIX D: RESOURCES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF MISCONDUCT, BIAS, HARASSMENT, OR ASSAULT .....</b>	<b>33</b>

## 1. OVERVIEW OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability (DGES) offers the following four graduate degrees in our on-campus program:

- [PhD in Geography and Environmental Sustainability](#)
- [MA in Geography and Environmental Sustainability](#)
- MS in Geography and Environmental Sustainability, *with 2 concentrations*:
  - [Environmental Systems](#)
  - [Geospatial Technologies](#)

In addition to the above degrees, DGES also offers a [Graduate Certificate in Geospatial Technologies](#) that can be earned concurrently by any OU graduate student.

For more information on the DGES graduate program, please contact the current Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Tom Neeson: [neeson@ou.edu](mailto:neeson@ou.edu). The Director of Graduate Studies is the DGES faculty member who chairs the department's Graduate Committee and serves as the department's liaison with OU's Graduate College.

## 2. ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

### 2.1 Frequently asked questions

For answers to questions that are frequently asked by prospective students, please see: <https://www.ou.edu/ags/geography/degree-programs/graduate-program/prospective-graduate-students>

### 2.2 Application deadlines

For full consideration, applications must be received by the following deadlines:

- **January 15** for applicants seeking admission and funding for the following fall semester
- **April 1** for applicants seeking admission **but not funding** for the following fall semester
- **September 1** for applicants seeking admission for the following spring semester

### 2.3 Requirements for admission

An undergraduate degree in Geography is not required. We welcome applications from students from many backgrounds; recent graduate students have undergraduate degrees in Anthropology, Applied Ecology, Atmospheric Sciences, Biology, Communication, Economics, Education, Environmental Sustainability, Geographic Information Systems, Geography, Global Development and Anthro-Ecology, Health and Exercise Science, History, Industrial Engineering, International Studies, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Meteorology, Native American Studies, Statistics, Strategic Communications, Urban Planning, Zoology, and more.

An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 is strongly preferred. In rare cases, a student with a GPA below 3.0 may be conditionally admitted. There are no specific undergraduate courses that are prerequisites for graduate study in DGES; however, individual faculty advisors may prefer students to have taken certain courses.

Most students complete a Master's degree before entering our Ph.D. program. However, strong applicants may be admitted directly into the Ph.D. program without first completing a Master's.

Before applying, you must identify a faculty member who is willing to serve as your thesis or dissertation supervisor. Prospective students should email faculty members to enquire about their availability and interest in serving as a thesis or dissertation supervisor.

#### 2.4 Application process for new students

Applications may be submitted through the University of Oklahoma's Graduate College application system: <https://gograd.ou.edu/apply/>

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- A statement of interest which describes your interests and goals, showing how these interests and goals are related to current faculty expertise. Your statement of interest should specify which faculty member(s) might serve as your thesis or dissertation advisor.
- Names and contact information of two individuals who will be contacted to submit letters of recommendation on your behalf.
- A resume or c.v.
- A writing sample such as an undergraduate paper, publication, thesis, or major research paper, written in English.
- Transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended.
- International students may also need to submit documentation of English language proficiency.

If English is not your first language, the University of Oklahoma will require you to demonstrate English language proficiency before admission. Please read the current policies and requirements regarding language proficiency:

<https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/apply/international-applicants#english-proficiency>.

Please note that the University of Oklahoma makes a distinction between countries which have English as an official language and countries in which English is the native or first language. To determine whether you will be required to demonstrate English proficiency, please see OU's list of Native English Speaking Countries:

<https://ou.edu/admissions/apply/international/ou-approved-native-english-speaking-countries>

#### 2.5 Current DGES students who wish to change their program

Current DGES graduate students may wish to change their degree program, either by switching Master's programs (e.g., changing from the M.A. to the M.S.), or applying to continue into the PhD after completing a Master's degree. If you wish to switch your degree program, submit an [Academic Change of Program \(ACOP\) application](#). There is no application fee for an ACOP. When submitting an ACOP to continue into the PhD program after completing a Master's degree, you must submit a full set of application documents (i.e., all documents listed in section 2.4). If you are switching into the PhD program and you would like to be considered for a GTA position, please ensure that your ACOP application is received before the relevant deadline (section 2.2). There are no required documents for an ACOP when switching Master's programs. Be sure to

consult your academic advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies before pursuing a degree switch.

## 2.6 Decision-making

Following the above deadlines, the DGES graduate committee (chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies) oversees the review of applications. Any DGES faculty member can access applications and share feedback with graduate committee members regarding which applicants should be admitted to the program and considered for funding. The graduate committee's recommendations regarding admittance and funding are discussed and voted upon during a DGES faculty meeting. Once final decisions are made, the Director of Graduate Studies contacts each applicant, informing them of the department's decision.

## 3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING

### 3.1 Overview of financial support and funding

DGES may offer successful applicants financial support in the form of a Graduate Assistantship (GA), which is a form of employment through the university. Not all DGES graduate students hold GA positions and admittance to our graduate program is not contingent on procuring one. We offer Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) on funded research projects, and Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) that support undergraduate and graduate learning across a wide range of departmental courses. GTA responsibilities vary by course but may include grading and instruction of lab sections.

Our students are often competitive for University Fellowships, which supplement GRA and GTA funding. Multiple fellowships are available, including those that support low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students. Students who apply for admission to the program may be nominated for consideration for these fellowships; no action is required by the applicant. For more information, please visit: <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/cost-and-aid/aid>

The timing of GA contracts varies by degree and availability. Generally, we offer Master's students two years of funding and Doctoral students four years of funding. GA funding is always contingent on student academic progress. Sometimes it is also subject to the availability of funds. Be aware that most GTA positions are 9-month appointments that do not provide funding for summer months.

In addition to a monthly stipend, 0.5 FTE GA positions include [health insurance](#) coverage and tuition waivers. Tuition Waivers do not cover the cost of student [fees](#). To estimate the cost of fees, use the [OU tuition and fee calculator](#).

### 3.2 Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs)

The details and duration of GRA positions are dependent on the funding source(s) and supervised by a DGES faculty member. Generally, GRAs are 0.5 FTE positions that entail a monthly stipend for an average of 20 hours a week of research-related labor determined by the supervising faculty member. GRA positions can be 9- or 12-month appointments. If you are offered a GRA position, be sure to discuss the details and duration with the supervising DGES faculty member.

### 3.3 Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)

A Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) is a graduate student on stipend whose primary responsibilities support the instructional mission of the university. GTA positions are typically 9-month (during fall and spring semesters only) appointments, and typically 0.5 FTE. TAs earn their monthly stipend with up to 20 hours a week (for a 0.5 FTE appointment) of instruction-related labor associated with a specific class (or classes). We attempt to align expertise and interests when assigning GTA positions, but students may be assigned to serve as a GTA for a course that they themselves have not yet taken.

### 3.4 Serving as instructor of record

DGES doctoral students will be allowed to teach a DGES class as the instructor of record if they have completed at least two semesters as a Teaching Assistant at OU or comparable institution for the class in question or a similar class, or have similar relevant professional experience as an instructor. They must also be in good standing within DGES and the Graduate College. If a doctoral student does not have at least two semesters of experience as a Teaching Assistant or instructor of record, they may be appointed as an instructor of record if they possess a demonstrably sophisticated grasp of the course material and an appropriate degree of poise, confidence, and determination as assessed by DGES leadership in conversation with the student and the student's advisor. For a graduate level course, the instructor of record also must hold graduate faculty status.

### 3.5 Holding a GTA or GRA appointments above 0.5

Sometimes students working as GAs have the opportunity to pursue a 0.70 FTE, but a special request must be made to the Departmental Chair and Director of Graduate Studies. This request must also be approved by the Graduate College. Students who have financial needs that remain unmet on a 0.5 FTE should explore the resources available in section 4.

### 3.6 Continued funding beyond initial contract

The typical duration of a GTA contract is two years (for Master's students) or four years (for PhD students), which matches the typical time-to-degree for DGES graduate students. However, DGES recognizes that not all students will be able to complete their degree within two (or four) years and may require a GTA position beyond the initial two (or four) years.

The Director of Graduate Studies will invite applications for continued funding in early fall (for spring semester funding) and early spring (for fall semester funding). Students already in the program seeking a new GTA contract (i.e., students who were previously unfunded or who are continuing beyond the two/four years of funding in their initial contract) need to:

1. Email the Director of Graduate Students a single PDF document that contains:
  - a. A one-page statement that gives a summary of your degree progress and research accomplishments to date, your plans for completing your degree, and a detailed timeline that explains the remaining tasks and when you will complete them. This statement must persuade the Graduate Committee that you are making good progress towards your degree and have a reasonable plan for completing it.

- b. A list of all funding you've had since starting the graduate degree program
  - c. The specific semester(s) for which you are requesting funding
  - d. Unofficial transcripts for all coursework completed at OU
2. Request that your academic advisor write a letter detailing the progress of your graduate studies and send it to the Director of Graduate studies.

Please note that this is a competitive process. Funding is not guaranteed, and your application will be considered alongside the applications of students who have applied to enter our graduate program that same semester.

### 3.7 Summer funding

DGES may occasionally have summer GTA or GRA positions available. Any available summer GTA or GRA positions will be advertised during the spring semester. Instructions for applying for these positions will be provided when the positions are advertised.

## 4. RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

### 4.1 The Association of Graduate Geography Students

The collective voice of [DGES graduate students](#) speaks through the Association of Graduate Geography Graduate Students (AGGS), as well as a representative serving on the [Graduate Student Senate](#).

For the 2023-2024 School Year, AGGS leadership is:

**President:** Megan Malish  
**Vice-President:** Olivia VanBuskirk  
**Treasurer:** Melissa Marquez  
**Secretary:** Madelyn Verno  
**Event Chair:** Madeline Wade

### 4.2 Resources for finding housing

AGGS is committed to helping incoming graduate students find affordable housing that meets their needs. If you need assistance finding housing, please contact any AGGS officer.

The University of Oklahoma offers on-campus housing for graduate students, including Traditions Square and the Kraettli Apartments. Please refer to OU Housing & Food Services for general information about on-campus housing. For off-campus housing, popular options include: [Callaway House Apartments](#), [The 2900](#), [Campus Lodge](#), [Redpoint](#), [Millenium](#), [The Links](#), [The Renaissance](#), [The Collective](#), [Alight 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue](#), [SpringField](#), or [Terra at University North Park](#).

While most of these housing options offer transportation to campus (i.e., shuttle service), some do not. Please check with the apartment's management about available resources and amenities.

The University of Oklahoma also maintains a database of some off-campus rental housing [at this website](#).



### 4.3 Transportation services for incoming students

The University of Oklahoma, through the New International Student Orientation Experience (NISO) program, provides incoming international students with airport transportation (i.e., pick-up) services from Will Rodgers World Airport to Norman. Should you need transportation assistance, please review the International Student Services [webpage](#). For domestic students needing assistance with transportation upon arrival in Norman, please contact your faculty advisor and/or AGGS Officers.

### 4.4 International Student Services

All incoming international students should reference the International Student Service (ISS) webpage (<https://www.ou.edu/cis/iss>) for information regarding immigration rulings, employment and working in the U.S., and transportation services.

Please note that all international students must complete a mandatory internet orientation (MIO), which should be completed prior to your first semester at OU.

### 4.5 OU Graduate College and Graduate Student Life

The [Graduate College website](#) is a vital resource. Note especially its pages devoted to new graduate students and the offerings of Graduate Student Life. As newly admitted graduate students learned from the official admittance email that they received from the Graduate College, this website also features important information about [enrollment](#). A wide range of professional development activities are available: <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/student-life/events-and-activities>.

The Graduate College also offers Academic Life Coaching, in which graduate students can meet one-one-one with a Coach to identify strategies for navigating academic and non-academic challenges. More information is available at: <https://www.ou.edu/alc/graduate-student-coaching>

### 4.6 Funding and resources for research, travel and publishing

The OU Graduate College offers Travel and Research grants to support graduate student scholarship, as well as completion fellowships for PhD students entering their final year. Available resources are summarized here: <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/cost-and-aid/aid>

The OU Libraries Research Publication Subvention Funding may be used to defray publication costs in open-access journals. Multiple funding programs are available and are summarized here: <https://libraries.ou.edu/content/research-publication-subvention-funding>

The OU Graduate Student Senate offers grants to support the scholarly endeavors of graduate students. Details are available at: <https://www.ou.edu/sga/graduate-student-senate/grants>

The Data Institute for Societal Challenges (DISC) offers seed funding to graduate student teams who are working on research projects related to data-enable research or data science. Details are available at: <https://www.ou.edu/disc/initiatives/seed-funding-opportunities>

#### 4.7 Departmental awards

DGES offers departmental awards that recognize outstanding contributions by graduate students in teaching, research and service. A list of current awards is available [here](#). Faculty advisors nominate their students for these awards. If you think you qualify for one or more of the awards, please be sure to discuss this with your faculty advisor!

#### 4.8 Health and well-being

If you need assistance determining what OU resources are available to support your physical health, mental health and well-being, please contact DGES Graduate Student Support Coordinator Judy-Lynn Estes ([jlestes@ou.edu](mailto:jlestes@ou.edu)). Important resources include:

OU Health Services are offered through the Goddard Health Center:

<https://www.ou.edu/healthservices>

The OU Counseling Center (<https://www.ou.edu/ucc>) offer comprehensive mental health services to graduate students. Counseling sessions are free for students with the OU graduate student health plan.

The OU Food Pantry (<https://www.ou.edu/foodpantry>) provides free food and resources such as clothes, menstrual products, and books to the OU community. Please check their website for hours and location. All current OU students, faculty and staff are eligible to use the OU Food Pantry.

#### 4.9 Emergency financial assistance

The OU College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences maintains the A&GS Student Emergency Fund. This fund is an assistance program for students to access short term financial help in times of need. The fund is open to all graduate students in the College. For information on how to apply for emergency financial assistance, please see:

<https://www.ou.edu/ags/connect-give/emergency-fund>

#### 4.10 How to report instances of bias, harassment, misconduct, or assault

DGES is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students. For guidance on how to report instances of bias, harassment, misconduct or assault, please see the flowchart in Appendix D. Please know that you may always reach out to AGGS leadership, the Graduate Student Support Coordinator, the Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the DGES Chair with any concerns.

## 5. EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

All graduate students admitted into the DGES graduate program should review and abide by the policies and practices outlined in both the [Graduate College Bulletin](#) and the OU [Student Handbook](#). Some useful sections include:

- For guidance on the use of human subjects in research, see GC Bulletin Section 1.7.
- For guidance on the use of vertebrate animals in research, see GC Bulletin Section 1.8.

- Academic Leave of Absence policies and procedures are detailed in GC Bulletin Section 3.6.3.

It is the responsibility of the graduate student to retain copies of all signed forms as you progress towards your degree. These forms are increasingly available online, and you're strongly encouraged to take advantage of the option to save the submitted form as a PDF.

## 5.1 Expectations for all students

Please remember that your success as a graduate student depends on other students, faculty and staff in diverse ways, and we all benefit when DGES is a positive, supportive, collegial and productive scholarly environment. To sustain this community, all graduate students are expected to be fully engaged citizens of DGES. This includes attending department events such as colloquia when possible and helping fellow graduate students when necessary, providing feedback on their writing and presentations, fully participating in lab or research group meetings, mentoring younger colleagues, and setting a high standard of behavior that others can emulate. Detailed suggestions and guidance are provided in the *Advising Agreement Between Graduate Students and Faculty*, which all students must sign during their first semester.

As soon as the OU Graduate College (GC) provides you with access to an OU email (see the official admittance email you receive from GC), begin checking it regularly. Be on the look-out for information regarding the DGES Graduate Student Orientation just before the start of your first semester, which ALL new DGES grad students must attend. In the event that you are unable to attend, immediately inform your advisor and work with the DGES the Director of Graduate Studies to make alternative arrangements.

Our graduate students are expected to be aware of and participate in departmental events and professional opportunities when possible. These events are advertised through social media and email listservs associated with DGES, College of Atmospheric & Geographic Sciences, and [Graduate Student Life](#).

## 5.2 Expectations for Graduate Teaching Assistants

### 5.2.1 Types of GTA appointments

There are two types of GTA appointments in DGES: **supporting** and **instructor of record**. The majority of GTAs hold supporting appointments.

**Supporting** appointments are those in which the GTA supports the primary instructor of the course. Responsibilities for supporting appointments are determined on a course-by-course basis through consultation with the primary instructor in advance of the semester and may include:

- Grading of course assignments
- Leading a discussion or laboratory section
- Holding office hours
- Communicating with students through email
- If the GTA is eligible to serve as instructor of record, a supporting appointment may *occasionally* include giving lectures in the Primary Instructor's absence. In such cases, the Instructor is responsible for providing all necessary materials such as slides or hand-written

notes to the TA well in advance. Lectures independently developed by the TA are possible, but the effort required to do so must result in a reduction of regular responsibilities so that the total workload does not increase.

**Instructor of record** appointments are those in which the GTA is the primary instructor of the course. Responsibilities for instructor of record appointments typically include:

- Developing and providing a syllabus to the course
- Developing/procuring and presenting course materials (composed of one or more of the following: slides, hand-written notes, publications, excerpts from textbooks, miscellaneous media, a Canvas page)
- Developing, administering, and grading all assignments in the course; or developing a rubric for supporting GTAs.
- Holding weekly office hours (required) and being otherwise routinely available to the students for questions on business days (including prompt response to email, use of Canvas, etc.)
- Submitting course grades

#### 5.2.2 Expectations for effort

Most GTA appointments in DGES are a full-time equivalency (FTE) load of 0.5 FTE, where 1 FTE = 40 hours per week. If you hold a 0.5 FTE GTA appointment, you should average 20 hours per week of work for your GTA position. Other GTA appointments may be 0.7 FTE (28 hours per week) or 0.2 FTE (8 hours per week).

For GTA appointments, the weekly workload can fluctuate considerably as the frequency of course assignments varies. Some tasks (e.g., grading exams) are often concentrated in certain periods of the semester. Your GTA appointment may require you to work more than 20 hours per week in some weeks, as long as the average hours worked per week does not exceed your FTE expectation. It is therefore important for GTAs to carefully budget and manage their time, preparing in advance of expected variations in workload (i.e., attempt to balance out effort as much as possible) so that remaining academic activities do not lead to excessive strain/stress.

If you find yourself routinely putting in more than the expected number of weekly hours based on your appointment level, you must reach out to find a solution. You may wish to discuss your appointment with: i) other students who have recently held or currently hold a similar appointment, ii) the Primary Instructor of the course, and/or iii) the DGES Director of Graduate Studies. For supporting GTA appointments, regular communication with the primary instructor regarding the level of effort required to support the course is strongly encouraged so that responsibilities and workload can be adjusted, if necessary, to best support the course. If you are regularly working more than the expected number of hours, we will find a solution.

Particularly with large undergraduate courses, it is common for students to unintentionally overburden GTAs with emails and questions, rather than the primary instructor of the course. If communication with the students (email or otherwise) begins to consume time best spent on the GTA's main responsibilities, please discuss the issue with the primary instructor for the course.

The primary instructor should be flexible to revising agreed-upon responsibilities as needed so that the highest priority support for the course is met within the constraints of the appointment level.

Regular book-keeping of efforts that can be shared with the primary instructor is encouraged. To minimize the burden of developing course content, course materials are expected to be shared among students who are/have been assigned as GTAs to a given course. For example, 1000-level labs typically are written already and prior TAs know where students struggle; this knowledge should be shared among TAs so that we can best serve our students.

### 5.2.3 Student mental health

The mental health of you and your students is important to us. Stress from classes, work, family, and other issues can weigh heavily on all of us. It is not your responsibility to assess anyone's mental health, but if you see a student struggling, if they were excelling and suddenly having problems, or if you see any other signs that something might be wrong, please send a report to OU's Behavior Intervention Team (<https://www.ou.edu/normanbit>). If you are personally struggling with mental health issues, please talk to someone. We know that TA positions have additional stresses and want to help. Resources to support your health and well-being are detailed in the DGES Graduate Program Guide.

### 5.2.4 Other GTA policies

If a student will miss class for which they are a GTA, and they are required to attend class as part of their GTA assignment, they must complete an Absence from Campus form and submit it to the primary instructor for the course. The form is available from the DGES front office and must be approved by the primary instructor before any classes are missed.

Although it may be possible to fulfill some GTA assignments remotely (e.g., if the work is primarily grading), DGES cannot guarantee a remote GTA position to any student. Thus, all students on a GTA contract should plan to be physically present in Norman to serve as a GTA in person. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Chair of DGES when it is in the professional interest of the student to hold a remote GTA position (e.g., the student is based elsewhere while conducting fieldwork for their thesis or dissertation).

In order to hold a GTA position, international students who did not graduate from a high school located in a country featured on [this list of OU-approved English-Speaking countries](#), must have their English skills certified through the [Graduate College's English Training and Certification Services \(ETCS\)](#). Be aware that this testing process costs \$50 and the department will pay this fee for individuals who have been ranked for funding through a TA position.

Most course policies that you must abide by as a GTA are outlined in the OU Faculty Handbook (OUFH), which is referenced below. These include:

- Do not discuss or disclose student enrollment or performance information within anyone but the individual student (see FERPA law) and the instructor of record
- Assignments worth more than 10% of a student's grade may not be assigned during prefinals week, with some unique exceptions (see Section 4.10.1 of the OUFH)
- Provide the syllabus by the first day of the semester (see Section 4.25 of the OUFH)

- Provide grades for assignments within 2 weeks of their due date, ideally via Canvas (see Section 4.11 of the OUFH)
- Do not reschedule course times for any reason without prior approval of the program Director, Dean, and Provost (see Sections 4.12 & 4.20 of the OUFH)
- Uphold academic integrity in your course. Any suspected violations of OU's integrity policy should be immediately reported via the *Academic Misconduct Reporting Form* to [integrity@ou.edu](mailto:integrity@ou.edu) (see <https://www.ou.edu/integrity> for complete guidance)
- As a mandatory reporter, you must report any instances of assault, harassment, and abuse that you become aware of (see responsibilities and guidelines outlined in detail at <https://www.ou.edu/eoo/reporting-responsibilities>)
- Meet final grade reporting deadlines (you should receive emails about this in advance, but check the Academic Calendar for the semester you GTA to be sure)

If you find yourself unable to abide by one or more of these policies for any reason, please notify the DGES Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible. Any GTA who regularly fails to satisfy policy and meet expectations of DGES may not be considered for GTA support in future semesters.

All GTAs are expected to:

1. Become familiar with the rules and procedures contained with the GC Bulletin (Section 4.3)
2. Be available and work up to 20 hours a week throughout the academic year (August 16 to May 15) *unless* the OU campus is closed (e.g., public holidays, Winter Break). Absences must be approved by the assistantship supervisor.
3. Understand employee obligations under health care regulations (e.g., the Affordable Care Act).

#### 5.2.5 Resources for GTAs

Faculty handbook (course requirements, policies, etc.) – <https://apps.hr.ou.edu/facultyhandbook/>. Read these carefully (most importantly Section 4), especially if you hold an instructional appointment. If you ever question whether an element of your course abides by OU policy, ask the DGES Director of Graduate Studies or another regular faculty member.

Canvas online learning management tool (a digital space for you to organize your course, post copies of the syllabus and other course materials, communicate with students, record grades, etc.); start early, update often – <https://canvas.ou.edu>; start organizing and adding materials at least one week prior to the start of class, and update often

#### 5.3 Expectations for Graduate Research Assistants

Work with your advisor to:

1. Become familiar with the rules and procedures contained with the GC Bulletin (Section 4.3)
2. Be available and work up to 20 hours a week throughout the academic year (August 16 to May 15) *unless* the OU campus is closed (e.g., public holidays, Winter Break). Absences must be approved by the assistantship supervisor.

3. Understand employee obligations under health care regulations (e.g., the Affordable Care Act).
4. If your GRA is a component of a team project, discuss with your advisor their expectations for authorship, co-authorship, and collaboration with others on the project team.

#### 5.4 Academic Integrity

Graduate students must uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the definitions, policies, and procedures concerning academic misconduct. These are explained in [\*\*A Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at the University of Oklahoma\*\*](#). The [\*\*Academic Integrity Code \(pdf\)\*\*](#) defines academic misconduct as any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement.

Academic misconduct reports fall into two categories, admonitions (warnings) and violations. A graduate student who has received a report of violation in a course may not drop the course in which the report has been made, unless the report is dismissed. Complete information about academic integrity is available at the [\*\*OU Academic Integrity website\*\*](#).

## 6. DGES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### 6.1 Office space, keys, travel cards and other resources

Office space and computers for GTAs and GRAs are assigned by the DGES front office staff. The DGES front office staff also handle distribution and return of related keys. In the event a GTA or GRA is provided an [\*\*OU Travel Card\*\*](#), you must apply for the card. Be sure to follow through with all related instructions you receive by email.

All students supported on a GRA through DGES or a GTA (through any department) will be given a desk in SEC. Students who are not supported on a GTA or DGES GRA be given a desk if one is available. When assigning desks to students not supported on a GRA/GTA, first priority will be given to PhD students, then MA/MS students pursuing a degree with a thesis, and then MA/MS students pursuing a coursework-based degree. Per the OU policy on office space, graduate students (like faculty and staff) are only permitted to have one office on campus. If your GRA is through another department, please request a desk in the department or research group that is funding you.

The guidelines for assigning desks are:

- 1) Where possible, students who share the same faculty advisor will be grouped together.
- 2) Whenever possible, the front office staff will avoid changing students' desk assignments. However, it may at times be necessary to change desk or office assignments as students enter and leave the graduate program.
- 3) The front office staff will not be able to accommodate requests from students for particular desks or offices. However, if harassment or other problematic behaviors occur among students in your office space, please contact DGES Graduate Student Support Coordinator, Judy-Lynn Estes ([jlestes@ou.edu](mailto:jlestes@ou.edu)). Judy-Lynn will meet with the offending student to determine the appropriate response. If the problem persists, the offending student will be moved (among other potential consequences).

## 7. ANNUAL EVALUATIONS

### 7.1 Annual progress reports

All students are required to submit a *Graduate Student Progress and Scholarship Report* before February 1 each year. Graduate students should work with their academic advisor to prepare and submit this form. This form is found on [this DGES webpage](#). Failure to complete the *Progress and Scholarship Report Form* will result in an unsatisfactory evaluation for the year and may jeopardize your eligibility for funding.

### 7.2 Satisfactory academic progress

The DGES Graduate Committee and the OU Graduate College will review the progress of all graduate students annually. Making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree includes, but is not limited to:

- Timely completion of the coursework required for the degree
- Submission of a program of study
- Progress made in completing research
- Timely completion of the non-thesis examination or general examination
- Timely completion of the thesis or dissertation defense or final submission

In addition, DGES graduate students must earn an A or B grade in core required courses – GEOG 6973 and GEOG 6953. Master's student also need to earn an A or B grade in the required methods course: GEOG 5313 (for MA students) or GIS 5923 (for MS students).

### 7.3 Academic warning or dismissal from the program

The Graduate College will send an academic warning to a student whose graduate GPA for the term is less than 3.00. A student who has received an academic warning is not in good academic standing. The student may return to good academic standing by earning a graduate GPA equal to or greater than 3.00 in the next term of enrollment.

### 7.4 Enrollment stop

The Graduate College will stop a student's enrollment if any of the following applies:

- The student's graduate GPA for the term is less than 3.00 and their record shows a graduate term GPA below 3.00 for one or more of the last two terms of enrollment.
- The student receives a grade of *U* in two consecutive terms.
- The student receives two unsatisfactory term or annual evaluations from the academic unit.

The program's graduate liaison may recommend that the student be permitted to continue in the program. In order to recommend continuation, the graduate liaison must propose a plan to remedy the academic situation. The plan should:

- Identify strategies to mitigate or resolve any factors that are negatively impacting the student's academic progress, which may include mentorship and advising strategies to support the student's successful completion.



- Outline all criteria necessary for the student to be judged as making satisfactory progress toward the degree.
- Outline specific expectations for enrollment, grades, progress, and research/degree milestones in current and/or future term(s).
- Include input from the student's major professor and thesis/doctoral committee, if applicable.

The dean of the Graduate College will approve or disapprove the recommendation or investigate further.

### 7.5 Dismissal from program

The Graduate College will dismiss a student from their graduate program if any of the following applies:

- The student's enrollment was previously stopped, and the graduate liaison does not recommend continuation.
- The student's enrollment was previously stopped, and they have failed to fulfill the criteria outlined in the approved plan for continuation.
- The student has failed the second attempt of the non-thesis examination or doctoral general examination.
- The student has failed the thesis or dissertation defense.
- The student has accumulated 9 or more credit hours of C, D, and/or F grades at any level in any combination as a doctoral student.

## 8. MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM

### 8.1 Timeline and key milestones

Masters students are required to complete all degree requirements within five calendar years from initial enrollment, although there is a process for requesting an extension (see GC Bulletin Section 7.1.5 for details). Specific deadlines for the degree are found here: <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#masters-deadlines>

### 8.2 Coursework

All Masters students (thesis and non-thesis) must trace a suitable coursework trajectory that takes the student to the end of the degree program. This information must be recorded on a degree-specific **Program of Study form**, which must be signed by student and the DGES Director of Graduate Studies and submitted to the Graduate College **before the end of the fourth week of their third semester**. Degree-specific Program of Study forms are available here:

- [MA in Geography and Environmental Sustainability](#)
- MS in Geography and Environmental Sustainability, *with 2 concentrations*:
  - [Environmental Systems](#)
  - [Geospatial Technologies](#)

Note that no more than half of your coursework can be comprised of S/U graded classes. For more information about course credit limitations, see Section 7.1.4 of the Graduate College Bulletin.

Petitions may be made to substitute alternative courses for specific required courses. The petition process begins when a student works with their advisor to formulate a specific request. The advisor should email this request to the Director of Graduate Studies, explaining and justifying exceptions to Graduate College rules (such as substitutions for required courses). The Director of Graduate Studies may then use this request to petition the Graduate College on behalf of the student.

Sometimes a petition regarding coursework requires an add/drop form. When graduate students need to submit an add/drop form, they work closely with their advisor to determine the necessary changes documented on the add/drop form, but the Director of Graduate Studies signs the form as “advisor” and the Dean of Graduate College signs the form as Dean.

### 8.3 Forming your thesis committee

Before the end of their second semester, full-time thesis Master’s students should work with their advisor to identify a thesis topic and two other faculty members who are well suited and are willing and able to serve on the student’s thesis committee. A majority of the committee members must hold an M1, M2, M3, RM1, RM2, RM3, or RM4 graduate faculty appointment within DGES. It is possible to have a non-DGES faculty member as the third member of your thesis committee, but they too must be members of the graduate faculty at OU. To check whether a faculty member has graduate faculty status, please see: <https://webapps.ou.edu/gradweb/gradfaculty.cfm>

If you and your advisor identify a researcher not affiliated with OU as an ideal committee member, then work with the Director of Graduate Studies to determine the feasibility of doing so.

Information on the thesis topic and committee membership must be recorded on a *Master’s Thesis Topic and Committee Membership (TTCM)* form (found on [this webpage](#)). This form must be signed by all committee members, the student, and the Director of Graduate Studies; and then submitted to the Graduate College. Please note that this form is commonly submitted at the same time as a Master’s student’s Program of Study form (see section 4.1 above) – before the end of the fourth week of their third semester.

If a student’s advisor leaves OU or is no longer able or willing to serve as the student’s advisor, the student must find a new faculty advisor within three months. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Committee will assist the student in identifying an advisor. M.A. and M.S. students who do not wish to find a new advisor may switch to the non-thesis degree. Students pursuing a thesis-based M.A. and M.S. degree who do not have a faculty advisor after three months will receive an unsatisfactory progress letter and lose any departmental TA support.

### 8.4 Requirement for annual committee meetings

Beginning in the second year of their program, all graduate students must meet with their full thesis or dissertation committee annually (i.e., before the end of spring semester). The annual evaluation form will ask students to confirm that they have met with their committee during the last academic year.

## 8.5 Thesis proposal

The department requires that students have their thesis proposal and a related timeline approved by their committee before the end of the fourth week of their third semester. There are no departmental requirements for the format and content of the proposal. Talk with your thesis advisor and committee regarding their expectations for the thesis proposal, as well as the way(s) in which you should share it with your committee. The department does not require Master's students to publicly present their thesis proposal.

## 8.6 Comprehensive exam for non-thesis students

By the end of their third semester, non-thesis Master's students should identify a faculty member who is willing to serve as the Chair of the student's non-thesis exam committee. The student should work with this faculty member to select two other suitable and available faculty members to serve on the non-thesis exam committee. A majority of the committee members must hold an M1, M2, M3, RM1, RM2, RM3, or RM4 graduate faculty appointment within DGES. It is possible to have a non-DGES faculty member as the third member of your thesis committee, but they too must be members of the graduate faculty at OU. To check whether a faculty member has graduate faculty status, please see: <https://webapps.ou.edu/gradweb/gradfaculty.cfm>

Students are **strongly encouraged** to meet with each non-thesis exam committee member individually to discuss the content and format of the student's non-thesis exam before the start of the semester during which a student expects to take their non-thesis exam.

At the start of the semester you expect to undertake the non-thesis exam, your non-thesis exam committee Chair must work with the DGES Graduate Liaison to request permission from the Graduate College to conduct the exam (details can be found in Section 7.3 of the GC Bulletin).

## 8.6 Submitting papers for publication

If a paper will be included in a student's thesis, all members of the thesis committee must be given the opportunity to review that paper before it is submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. Prior to submission, the student should send the final version of the paper to all committee members. Committee members should aim to assent to the submission or give the student constructive feedback within two weeks. If more time is needed, the committee member and student should agree upon an alternative timeline. Reviewing a student's paper does not in itself warrant co-authorship on that paper for the committee member. At their first committee meeting, graduate students are encouraged to have a discussion with their committee about expectations for co-authorship.

## 8.7 Final steps: Thesis defense and completing your thesis

Congratulations on being close to completing your thesis! Please be aware that there are a number of important deadlines and forms related to defending and completing your thesis. **Failure to meet these deadlines will delay your graduation.** Please see Section 10 of this document, "Completing Your Thesis or Dissertation" for details.

## 9. DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM

### 9.1 Timeline and key milestones

All doctoral students should also locate and abide by the Graduate College's [guidance on degree completion](#). As indicated in Section 8.2.5 of the GC Bulletin, all degree requirements must be completed within five calendar years after passing the General Exam, although there is a process for requesting an extension (see Section 8.2.5.1 of GC Bulletin for details).

### 9.2 Coursework

Before the end of the second semester, PhD students should work with their advisor to trace a suitable coursework trajectory that takes the student to the end of the degree program and prepares them to undertake research and prepare a successful dissertation. See the [doctoral degree check sheet](#) for details on required courses.

Note that no more than 49% of your coursework may be comprised of transfer credit hours. See Section 8.2.2 of the GC Bulletin for details. Likewise, no more than half of your coursework can be comprised of S/U graded classes. See Section 8.2.4.2 of the GC Bulletin.

You can enroll in dissertation hours (GEOG 6890) for the first time during the semester you take your general exam, unless your advisory committee deems it necessary for you to pursue more coursework before enrolling in GEOG 6890.

Petitions may be made to substitute alternative courses for specific required courses. The petition process begins when a student works with their advisor to formulate a specific request. The advisor emails this request to the Director of Graduate Studies, explaining and justifying exceptions to Graduate College rules (such as substitutions for required courses). The Director of Graduate Studies may then use this request to petition the Graduate College on behalf of the student.

Sometimes a petition regarding coursework requires an add/drop form. When graduate students need to submit an add/drop form, they work closely with their advisor to determine the necessary changes documented on the add/drop form, but the Director of Graduate Studies signs the form as "advisor" and the Dean of Graduate College signs the form as Dean.

### 9.3 Forming your dissertation committee

Before the end of the third semester, the student must identify a dissertation topic, a chair, and at least three other faculty members who are well suited, willing and able to serve on student's dissertation committee. A majority of the committee members must hold an M1, M2, M3, RM1, RM2, RM3, or RM4 graduate faculty appointment within DGES. It is possible to have a non-DGES faculty member as a member of your committee, but they too must be members of the graduate faculty at OU. To check whether a faculty member has graduate faculty status, please see: <https://webapps.ou.edu/gradweb/gradfaculty.cfm>

If you and your advisor identify a researcher not affiliated with OU as an ideal committee member, then work with the Director of Graduate Studies to determine the feasibility of doing so.

At least one committee member must be a graduate faculty from outside DGES. The GC refers to this committee member as the “Graduate College representative” because their primary role is to represent the GC’s policies and procedures (see Section 8.3.1.2 of the GC Bulletin to learn more about the Graduate College’s representative’s role).

Should you wish to change your advisor or committee membership, see Section 8.4.1 of the GC Bulletin. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that both the old and new committees, as well as the DGES Director of Graduate Studies, are aware of changes.

Students must identify a faculty advisor within three months of the start of their program. If a student’s advisor leaves OU or is no longer able or willing to serve as the student’s advisor, the student must find a new faculty advisor within three months. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Committee will assist the student in identifying an advisor. Ph.D. students who do not have a faculty advisor after three months will receive an unsatisfactory progress letter and lose any departmental TA support.

Your first full committee meeting typically constitutes the Advisory Conference required by the OU Graduate College. The Advisory Conference Report (ACR; located in the section for doctoral students on the [Forms and Documents page of the GC website](#)) must be submitted to the GC before the semester when general exam will be taken. The ACR list coursework taken and planning for the PhD degree and must be approved by your dissertation committee. Missed deadlines will require a petition to the GC that is sent by the Director of Graduate Studies. A student must work with their advisor to formulate a request for tardy paperwork to be accepted that explains and justifies the late submission. The advisor emails this request to the Director of Graduate Studies, who may use it to petition the Graduate College on behalf of the student.

#### 9.4 Requirement for annual committee meetings

Beginning in the second year of their program, all graduate students must meet with their full thesis or dissertation committee annually (i.e., before the end of spring semester). The annual evaluation form will ask students to confirm that they have met with their committee during the last academic year.

#### 9.5 Dissertation proposal

The department requires that PhD students publicly present their dissertation proposal and that their doctoral advisory committee approves of the dissertation proposal. The presentation of a dissertation proposal may occur before or after the general exam. The design and content of the proposal, as well as the timing and style of its presentation, is determined in consultation with dissertation advisor. Before holding the proposal defense, the student must publicly advertise the event by emailing the DGES faculty and graduate student listservs. The student should inform the Director of Graduate Studies in writing when their dissertation proposal has been presented and approved by the Advisory Committee. Copy all committee members on this email.

#### 9.6 General exam

The general examination is intended to test the student’s mastery of a number of related fields as well as the student’s capacity for synthesis, sound generalization, and critical ability. The first part

of the general examination consists of written examinations. A satisfactory written examination will be followed by an oral examination in the presence of the entire committee.

See Section 8.5 of the Graduate College Bulletin for an overview of regulations regarding the general exam. Our department recommends that PhD students take their general exam before the end of their fifth semester, after they have completed all essential coursework, *except* for dissertation hours (GEOG 6980). As indicated in Section 8.2.5 of the GC Bulletin, PhD students must successfully pass their General Exam within four calendar years from initial enrollment, although there is a process for requesting an extension (see Section 8.2.5.1 for details).

Please recall that the *Advisory Conference Report* form must be filed with the Graduate College no later than one semester before the general exam will be taken. The student must also apply for permission from the Graduate College to take the general exam by submitting the *General Exam Application for the Doctoral Degree*. When permission is granted, the Graduate College will send the student and advisor the *Authority Report Form for the General Examination*. This form must be completed and returned to the Graduate College within 72 hours of the completion of the exam. Please see Appendix B for a checklist of these forms and deadlines.

The contents of the general exam will be determined by the student's dissertation committee. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their advisor and each committee member individually **several months before the general exam** to clarify the content and quantity of questions asked, expectations regarding written responses to questions and the verbal portion of the exam. Committee members may wish to see your dissertation proposal before discussing the content of the general exam. After meeting with all committee members, the student is **strongly encouraged** to email the entire committee a summary of the student's understanding of the expected format and content (e.g., any readings assigned by each committee member) for the general exam. This email serves as written documentation of the expected scope and content of the exam.

The written portion of the exam consists of a series of examination questions submitted by the Advisory Committee that are answered in accordance with the directions of the dissertation committee. These questions may be open- or closed-book and will have time limits as determined by the committee. The overall time required to complete the entire written portion of the exam typically ranges from a few days to a week.

The oral portion of the general exam is administered after the committee has evaluated the written portion of the general exam and decided that it meets expectations. During the oral portion of the exam, doctoral students sit with, and respond to questions, from the full committee. The questions may focus on or extend beyond the written portion of the exam. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of DGES, the specific topics covered in the oral examination will vary depending on the student's research emphasis. The amount of time required for the oral examining is usually at least two hours, and possibly longer depending on the material covered.

### 9.7 Submitting papers for publication

If a paper will be included in a student's dissertation, all members of the dissertation committee must be given the opportunity to review that paper before it is submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

Prior to submission, the student should send the final version of the paper to all committee members. Committee members should aim to assent to the submission or give the student constructive feedback within two weeks. If more time is needed, the committee member and student should agree upon an alternative timeline. Reviewing a student's paper does not in itself warrant co-authorship on that paper for the committee member. At their first committee meeting, graduate students are encouraged to have a discussion with their committee about expectations for co-authorship.

### 9.8 Final steps: dissertation defense and completing your dissertation

Congratulations on being close to completing your PhD! Please be aware that there are a number of important deadlines and forms related to defending and completing your dissertation. **Failure to meet these deadlines will delay your graduation.** Please see Section 10 of this document, "Completing Your Thesis or Dissertation" for details.

## 10. COMPLETING YOUR THESIS OR DISSERTATION

This section explains in detail the process, deadlines and forms required for completing, defending and depositing your thesis or dissertation. For a summary of key deadlines and forms, please see Appendix A (for Master's theses) or Appendix B (for PhD dissertations).

### 10.1 Scheduling your defense

Congratulations on being nearly done! As soon as you are confident of your anticipated completion timeline (e.g., you are confident that you will be able to defend at the end of the semester), please work with your committee to schedule a time and place for your defense. Most thesis and dissertation defenses last at least two hours and begin with a short presentation. They must be attended by all committee members (electronically or otherwise, see Section 7.2.5.3 of the GC Bulletin) and must be open to the public. In order to graduate in a particular semester, please ensure that your defense will be held before the deadline indicated on the [Academic Calendar](#). Once the date of your defense has been finalized, please work with the DGES front office staff to reserve a room for the defense and post public announcements of the defense.

Defenses are not permitted during the final exam period nor when the University is not in session (e.g., over winter break). Please also remember that most faculty are on 9-month appointments (i.e., August 15 to May 15) and are not obligated to be available for committee service during the summer holiday. Defenses are discouraged during summer (between May 15 and August 15) but may be held during that period at the discretion of the committee. Before assuming that you will be able to defend in the summer, please confirm that all committee members will be available. Do not assume that your committee will agree to a summer defense.

When scheduling your defense, remember that you will need to have all revisions completed to your committee members' satisfaction before depositing the final version of your thesis/dissertation in the SHAREOK repository. Typically, the deadline for depositing your thesis or dissertation in SHAREOK is only one week after the final day on which the Graduate College permits you to hold your thesis or dissertation defense; thus, *if you hold your defense on or near the final day permitted by the Graduate College, you will have only one week to complete all*

*revisions to your thesis or dissertation.* Students are **strongly discouraged** from scheduling their defense on or near the final date permitted by the Graduate College, unless they are very confident that the committee will request only very minor revisions (e.g., the committee has already reviewed a nearly-complete draft or significant portions of the thesis/dissertation) and the student is confident that they will be able to complete all revisions within one week. If you are unable to complete revisions before the SHAREOK deadline, the Graduate College will require you to enroll in (and pay tuition for) at least two credits of GEOG 6980 for the following semester.

Once you and your advisor have determined that you will defend the thesis at the end of the semester, you must complete the online *Request for Degree Check* form and submit it to the Graduate College. This form is due no later than the second week of the semester in which the student intends to defend the dissertation.

## 10.2 Sharing your thesis or dissertation with your committee and DGES

Before your defense, you must share a “reading copy” of your thesis or dissertation with your committee and with the DGES community. The reading copy is a draft thesis or dissertation that is nearly complete, such that only minor revisions will be required after the defense.

All students: DGES requires that all students make the reading copy of their thesis or dissertation publicly available **at least 10 working days prior to the defense.** To fulfill this requirement, you must email a PDF version of your reading copy to the DGES faculty and graduate student listservs ([geogfacultyall-l@lists.ou.edu](mailto:geogfacultyall-l@lists.ou.edu) and [DGES\\_GRAD\\_C-L@LISTS.OU.EDU](mailto:DGES_GRAD_C-L@LISTS.OU.EDU)). This email should also give the time and place of your defense. Please ask your committee members whether they would prefer to receive a PDF or paper version of your reading copy; after you have shared the reading copy with your thesis/dissertation committee, you must submit the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend* form to the Graduate College. **This form must be submitted at least 10 working days prior to the defense.**

Master’s students: While the Graduate College **recommends** that the thesis draft be submitted to the committee at least 30 days prior to the defense, the thesis committee will determine how far in advance the student should provide the draft to all committee members. This time limit should allow the committee sufficient time to review the thesis and approve any revisions required before the deadline for submitting. At a minimum, DGES **requires** that the thesis draft be submitted to the committee at least 10 working days prior to the defense.

PhD students: While the Graduate College **recommends** that the dissertation draft be submitted to the committee at least 30 days prior to the defense, the dissertation committee will determine how far in advance the student should provide the draft to all committee members. This time limit should allow the committee sufficient time to review the thesis and approve any revisions required before the deadline for submitting. At a minimum, DGES **requires** that the thesis draft be submitted to the committee at least 10 working days prior to the defense. However, unless the committee has already read and approved a majority of the dissertation, they will require more than 10 days to read it.



### 10.3 Holding the defense

Committee members must sign the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend* form (see 10.2) at least five working days before the defense. If the request for authority can be approved, the Graduate College will issue the *Authority Report Form for the Dissertation Defense* to the student, the doctoral committee, and the graduate liaison via OU email. The student may not defend until this form has been issued. The result of an unauthorized defense will not, under any circumstances, be considered valid. The *Authority Report Form* is valid only for the period indicated on the form. If the defense is not held during this period, the graduate liaison or committee chair must notify the Graduate College in writing as to why the defense was not held and the form must be returned marked “Not Taken.” The dissertation defense must then be rescheduled for a future term and the student must submit a new *Request for Degree Check and Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend* form.

### 10.4 Depositing your final thesis or dissertation with SHAREOK

Congratulations on your successful defense! After a successful defense, you must complete any revisions required by the committee before submitting the final dissertation to the SHAREOK repository. Submission instructions will be provided by the Graduate College in the email authorizing the defense. The final thesis is due within 60 calendar days of the defense, but a student planning to graduate in a given semester may need to submit the final document sooner in order to meet the graduation deadline for that semester indicated on the [Academic Calendar](#). A student who does not submit the final thesis during the semester of the defense must enroll in at least two hours of 5980 during the semester in which the thesis is submitted.

Before submitting the final thesis to SHAREOK, the student must submit the *Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission to SHAREOK* form to the Graduate College. The committee members must sign this form to indicate the date by which the student completed all required revisions and is eligible to submit the final document to SHAREOK.

## 11. APPENDIX A: TIMELINE FOR THE MASTERS PROGRAM

The timeline below applies to full-time Masters students aiming to complete the degree in two years. If you are not a full-time Masters student, please work with your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to determine an alternative timeline.

DGES deadlines are in purple. OU Graduate College deadlines are in red.

**For specific calendar dates and links to web forms for Graduate College (GC) deadlines, see:**  
<https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#masters-deadlines>

### Year 1

#### Semester 1

- Complete the *Advising Agreement* form before the end of your first semester
- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework plans
- Recommendation: take GEOG 6973 (if fall) or GEOG 6953 (if spring)
- Recommendation: take GEOG 5313 (if fall and MA student) or GIS 5923 (if fall and MS student)

#### Semester 2

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework plans
- Thesis students: work with your advisor to select your thesis committee
- Recommendation: take GEOG 6973 (if fall) or GEOG 6953 (if spring)
- Recommendation: take GEOG 5313 (if fall and MA student) or GIS 5923 (if fall and MS student)

### Year 2

#### Semester 1 (third semester in program)

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework plans
- Thesis students: work with your advisor to prepare a thesis proposal before the fourth week of the semester. Share this document with your committee.
- Submit *Program of Study* to the GC
- Thesis students: submit the *Thesis Topic and Committee Membership* form to the GC
- Apply for Graduation with the Graduate College

#### Semester 2 (fourth semester in program)

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework plans
- Thesis students: submit the *Request for Degree Check* form to the GC
- Thesis students: schedule your defense with your committee. When selecting the date, pay attention to GC deadlines at the link above.
- Thesis students: At least 10 working days before your defense, provide your committee with the reading copy of your thesis. Your committee may request your thesis earlier than this date.
- Thesis students: At least 10 working days prior to the defense, submit the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend* to the GC

Thesis students: At least 10 working days prior to the defense, email the reading copy of your thesis to the DGES faculty and graduate student listservs. This email should also announce the time and place of your defense.

Thesis students: defend your thesis!

Thesis students: after the thesis defense, the committee will report its decision on the *Authority Report Form for the Thesis Defense* by indicating a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” result. You must return a completed copy of this form to the Graduate College within three working days of the dissertation defense.

Thesis students: Make any needed thesis revisions and submit *Approval for Thesis Submission to SHAREOK* form

Thesis students: Submit your thesis to the SHAREOK repository

Non-thesis students: discuss the format of your non-thesis exam with your advisor as early as possible. Remind your advisor that they must request authority from the GC to hold the non-thesis exam. Complete your exam and ensure that your advisor promptly reports the results to the GC.

Congratulations!

## 12. APPENDIX B: TIMELINE FOR THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

If you are not a full-time Doctoral student, please work with your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to determine an alternative timeline for submitting Graduate College paperwork and a proposal to your dissertation committee.

DGES deadlines are in purple. OU Graduate College deadlines are in red. This timeline assumes that the proposal defense and general exam will be held in the fifth semester, which is common for DGES students. Deadlines related to the proposal defense and general exam are in orange. If you plan to hold your proposal defense and general exam in a different semester, please shift these deadlines accordingly.

**For specific calendar dates and links to web forms for Graduate College (GC) deadlines, see:**  
<https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/graduate-college-bulletin#8.1>  
<https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/forms#doctoral-forms>

### Year 1

#### Semester 1

- Complete the *Advising Agreement* form before the end of your first semester
- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework
- Recommendation: take GEOG 6973 (if fall) or GEOG 6953 (if spring)

#### Semester 2

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework
- Recommendation: take GEOG 6973 (if fall) or GEOG 6953 (if spring)

### Year 2

#### Semester 1 (third semester in program)

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework
- Work with your advisor to assemble your dissertation committee

#### Semester 2 (fourth semester in program)

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework
- Meet with your committee to discuss your research plans and timeline for completing key milestones (general exam, proposal defense, research tasks and dissertation). For most students, this first committee meeting should serve as the *Advisory Conference* required by the GC.
- Complete the *Advisory Conference Report* no later than one semester before the general exam will be held. (GC deadline)
- Recommendation: meet with each committee member individually to discuss their expectations for your general exam and dissertation proposal.

### Year 3

#### Semester 1 (fifth semester in program)

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research and coursework
- As early as possible, schedule the time and place for your general exam and proposal defense
- Submit the *General Exam Application for the Doctoral Degree* to the GC no later than the end of the second week of the semester in which the exam will be taken. (GC deadline)

- Publicly advertise your dissertation proposal presentation by email to the DGES faculty and grad student listservs. (DGES deadline)
- Complete the written portion of your general exam.
- Publicly present your dissertation proposal. (Often, but not always, at the start of the oral portion of your general exam). (DGES deadline)
- Complete the oral portion of your general exam.
- Within three working days of the general exam, complete and return the *Authority Report Form for the General Examination* to the GC. (GC deadline)

### Year 3 and beyond

- Meet regularly with your advisor to discuss research
- If you have passed your general exam, enroll in at least two credits of GEOG 6980. Once you begin enrolling in 6980, you must enroll in a minimum of two credit hours of 6980 each semester.
- Meet at least annually with your committee to discuss research progress and plans

### Final year

#### Final semester

- Enroll in at least two credits of GEOG 6980, even if it is the summer session.
- Apply for graduation online, according to the deadlines indicated on the [Academic Calendar](#).
- No later than the second week of the semester, submit a *Request for Degree Check* to the GC
- As soon as you are confident that you will defend this semester, schedule the time and place for your dissertation defense
- Provide a complete draft of your dissertation to every member of your committee. The doctoral committee will determine how far in advance the student should provide the draft to all committee members. **The Graduate College recommends (but does not require) that the dissertation draft be submitted to the committee at least 30 days prior to the defense.** DGES requires that the dissertation draft be submitted to the committee at least 10 working days prior to the defense. However, unless the committee has already read and approved a majority of the dissertation, they will require more than 10 days to read it.
- Submit the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request Authority to Defend* form at least ten working days before the defense.
- At least 10 working days prior to the defense, email the reading copy of your dissertation to the DGES faculty and graduate student listservs. This email should also announce the time and place of your defense.
- Defend your dissertation!
- After the dissertation defense, the committee will report its decision on the *Authority Report Form for the Dissertation Defense* by indicating a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” result. You must return a completed copy of this form to the Graduate College within three working days of the dissertation defense.
- Complete any revisions requested by the committee
- After your committee has approved your final dissertation, submit the *Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission to SHAREOK* form to the Graduate College.
- Submit your dissertation to the SHAREOK institutional repository, according to the instructions you received in the Graduate College email authorizing your defense.

Congratulations!

### 13: APPENDIX C: CHANGING VARIABLE CREDIT COURSE HOURS

Once you enroll in a course that is variable credit hours, the system will automatically enroll you in the minimum number of hours for that course.

REGISTER FOR CLASSES

Find Classes | Enter CRNs | My Plans | My Schedule and Options

Enter Your Search Criteria

Term: Fall 2014

Subject:

Course Number:

Keyword:

Search Clear Advanced Search

Schedule | Schedule Details | Summary

Class Schedule for Fall 2014

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1pm		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Understanding of Art		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Understanding of Art		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Understanding of Art	
2pm			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Understanding of Art				
3pm							
4pm							
5pm		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University Marching Band		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University Marching Band	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University Marching Band	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University Marching Band	

Title	Details	Hours	CRN	Schedule Type	Status	Action
The Understanding...	A HI 1113...	3	14214	Lecture	Registered	None
University Marching...	MUTE 113...	0	19332	Perfor...	Registered	None

Total Hours | Registered: 3.0 | Billing: 3.0 | CEU: 0.0 | Min: 0.0 | Max: 13.0

Submit

You can see the number of hours that you are currently enrolled in.

Click on “My Schedule and Options” to change the number of hours that you are enrolled in.

Banner Self-Service | Student | Registration | Select a Term | Register for Classes

REGISTER FOR CLASSES

Find Classes | Enter CRNs | My Plans | My Schedule and Options

Summary

Term: Fall 2014

Title	Hours	CRN	Grade Mode	Level	Study Path
The Understanding of Art	3	14214	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None
<u>University Marching Band</u>	<u>0</u>	19332	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None

Records: 2

Total Hours | Registered: 3.0 | Billing: 3.0 | CEU: 0.0 | Min: 0.0 | Max: 13.0

The course with variable credit hours is underlined.

Click on the credit hours and it will give you the credit hour range for the course in question.

Title	Hours	CRN	Grade Mode	Level	Study Path
<a href="#">The Understanding of Art</a>	3	14214	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None
<a href="#">University Marching Band</a>	<input type="text" value="1"/> Must be from 0 to 1	19332	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None

Records: 2

Change the credit hours to what you are wanting within the credit hour range. Then submit your change.

**REGISTER FOR CLASSES**

Find Classes | Enter CRNs | My Plans | **My Schedule and Options**

**Summary**  
Term: Fall 2014

Title	Hours	CRN	Grade Mode	Level	Study Path
<a href="#">The Understanding of Art</a>	3	14214	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None
<a href="#">University Marching Band</a>	1	19332	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None

Records: 2

Total Hours | Registered: 3.0 | Billing: 3.0 | CEU: 0.0 | Min: 0.0 | Max: 13.0

---

**Schedule** | Schedule Details

Class Schedule for Fall 2014

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1pm		✓ The Understanding of Art		✓ The Understanding of Art		✓ The Understanding of Art	
2pm			✓ The Understanding of Art				
3pm							
4pm		✓ University Marching Band		✓ University Marching Band	✓ University Marching Band	✓ University Marching Band	
5pm							

**Submit**

Credit hour change will be reflected here.

Click on Submit.

Once you have submitted the change you will get a message that states, "Save Successful."

Student | Test | Sign Out | 1 Notifications

Banner Self-Service Student Registration Select a Term Register for Classes

**Save Successful**

REGISTER FOR CLASSES

Find Classes Enter CRNs My Plans **My Schedule and Options**

**Summary**  
Term: Fall 2014

Title	Hours	CRN	Grade Mode	Level	Study Path
The Understanding of Art	3	14214	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None
University Marching Band	1	19332	Letter Graded	Undergraduate	None

Records: 2

Total Hours | Registered: 4.0 | Billing: 4.0 | CEU: 0.0 | Min: 0.0 | Max: 13.0

Schedule Schedule Details

Class Schedule for Fall 2014

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1pm		The Understanding of Art		The Understanding of Art		The Understanding of Art	
2pm			The Understanding of Art				
3pm							
4pm		University Marching Band		University Marching Band	University Marching Band	University Marching Band	
5pm							

Panels Submit



# 14. Appendix D: Resources for reporting incidents of misconduct, bias, harassment, or assault

## Reporting Options

**Did you know?** Most OU employees are **mandatory reporters**, meaning all incidents of alleged sexual assault, stalking, dating or domestic violence, sexual harassment, or gender discrimination an employee is directly told about or observes must be reported. Confidentiality is limited as a result.

**Confidential:** report will not be divulged without consent  
**Anonymous:** Report cannot be linked to reporting party

**Bias incidents** can occur in a variety of settings but have one important factor in common: they create a hostile working, learning, or living environment and frequently have a negative psychological, emotional, or physical effect on an individual or community.



You are in immediate danger and/or need medical attention	An incident of sexual harassment, assault, misconduct or exploitation, stalking, dating and domestic violence, or retaliation has occurred	An incident of bias, prejudice or harmful speech or action that targets an individual or group based on their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sex, gender identity or expression, disability, or sexual orientation, veteran status, or any combination of such factors has occurred	Persistent microaggressions and/or consistently borderline behaviors are occurring in the department/school	I am not sure what category this falls into or where to start
Call 911				
OU Police Department Non-Emergency: 405.325.2864				
Goddard Health Center 405.325.4611				
OU Advocates <i>Confidential</i> 24/7 Helpline: 405.615.0013 WhatsApp available				
		OU Report! <i>Anonymous Possible</i> 844.428.6531 <a href="https://www.ou.ethics.point.com">https://www.ou.ethics.point.com</a>		
		(note that this report will route to different University offices depending on incident)		
		Institutional Equity Office <i>Anonymous Possible</i> 405.325.2215 Online reporting		
		Goddard Counselling Center <i>Confidential</i> 405.325.2911		
			Speak with AGS DEI council <i>Anonymous possible</i> <a href="https://www.ou.edu/ags/diversity">https://www.ou.edu/ags/diversity</a>	
			Speak with DGES advisor, mentor, or director/chair	
				Contact Student Affairs Committee <a href="http://sac.metr.ou.edu">http://sac.metr.ou.edu</a>
				Speak with party directly