



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

**DEPARTMENT  
OF  
GEOSCIENCES**

**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

---

**2017-2018**

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook describes graduate admissions and degree requirements for the Department of Geosciences at the University of Arkansas. Department of Geosciences graduate students are required to read this handbook and **sign the contract page** that states that the student understands the procedures and guidelines, and agrees to abide by them throughout his/her tenure within the program. The signed contract will be placed in the student's file. The handbook is designed to supplement the information provided in the University of Arkansas [Graduate School Catalog](#). The [Graduate School](#) is located in 213 Gearhart Hall, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701, Phone: 479-575-4401

The degrees offered by the Department of Geosciences are a Master of Science in Geology (MS), a Master of Science in Geography (MS), and a Doctorate of Geosciences (PhD). Each program has separate admission requirements, separate requirements for fulfilling the degree and separate graduate coordinators. Current graduate coordinators:

**Geology** Celina Suarez, Gearhart 226, 479-575-4866, [casuarez@uark.edu](mailto:casuarez@uark.edu)

**Geography** – Fiona Davidson, Gearhart 115, 479-575-3879, [fdavidso@uark.edu](mailto:fdavidso@uark.edu)

**Geosciences PhD** Dave Stahle, Gearhart 227, 479-575-3703, [dstahle@uark.edu](mailto:dstahle@uark.edu)

The Department also is part of the interdisciplinary graduate programs in Environmental Dynamics (ENDY) and Space and Planetary Sciences (SPAC). ENDY offers only the PhD. SPAC offers the MS and PhD. Students may also obtain the MS in Geology or MS in Geography with a concentration in Space and Planetary Sciences. For additional information contact:

**ENDY** Peter Ungar, 330 Old Main Hall, 479-575-6361, [pungar@uark.edu](mailto:pungar@uark.edu)

**SPAC** (to be announced)

The main office for Geosciences is located in 216 Gearhart Hall. The members of the office staff are here to keep the department running smoothly and to help with whatever problems and concerns that may occur. Each staff member is responsible for specific aspects of the department. Please give them the utmost respect as they will be invaluable to your success. Department Chairman is Christopher Liner, 216 Gearhart Hall, 479-575-5667, [liner@uark.edu](mailto:liner@uark.edu)

## ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Students wishing to pursue a degree in the Department of Geosciences must be admitted to both the Graduate School and the Department. Detailed requirements for regular admission to the Graduate School are outlined in the Graduate School Catalog. Application forms and catalogs can be obtained from the Graduate School.

All students wishing to pursue degrees in either Master's Program must be admitted to the Graduate School (see the Graduate School for admission requirements and procedures.) If interested in a teaching assistantship, the student must indicate so in the application process. To be eligible for a teaching assistantship All files must be complete by **February 15th** for admission in the **Fall** semester and by **October 15th** for admission in the **Spring** semester. **For PhD students seeking financial assistance all files must be received by January 5.** The Department requires the GRE for admission into all programs.

Each program also has specific prerequisites as follows: **MS GEOLOGY** Students must have completed an undergraduate geology program similar to that required for the B.S. Degree in geology at the University of Arkansas. The required courses for the B.S. include: Physical Geology (GEOS 1113/1111L), Mineralogy and Petrology (GEOS 2313), Sedimentary Rocks (GEOS 3413), Structural Geology (GEOS 3514), Stratigraphy and Sedimentation (GEOS 4223), Earth System History (GEOS 4924), and Geology

Field Camp (GEOS 4686). In addition, students are required to complete **one year** of College or University Physics, one year of University Chemistry, and one year of Calculus. Students lacking the appropriate background may satisfy deficiencies while enrolled in the Graduate School.

**MS GEOGRAPHY** Students must have completed satisfactory undergraduate preparation in geography, including fulfillment of all the required courses for an undergraduate degree in Geography at the University of Arkansas. These courses include Human Geography (GEOS 1123), Earth Science (GEOS 1133 and GEOS 1131L), World Regional Geography (GEOS 2003), Introduction to Cartography (GEOS 3023) and Geospatial Applications and Information Science (GEOS 3543) or equivalent classes. Students may satisfy deficiencies while enrolled in the Graduate School.

**PhD GEOSCIENCES** Applicants for the doctoral program must have completed the baccalaureate degree with a major in geosciences or an allied discipline. Students with academic preparation at the undergraduate or masters level in other disciplines of physical science, engineering, and mathematics are also encouraged to apply ([specific admission requirements](#)).

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Departmental Teaching Assistantships:** There are a limited number of teaching assistantships available for qualified students. Students who wish to be considered for

an assistantship must have a complete application packet (acceptance into the Graduate School, three letters of recommendation, statement of goals and an indication that

an assistantship is requested on the online application **January 5** for PhD students, **February 15<sup>th</sup>** for MS student admission in the fall semester, and **October 15** for MS student admission the spring semester. Students who are unsure if their academic records would be competitive for consideration for assistantships may contact the Department of Geosciences directly. Students are advised that assistantship possibilities for entry in the spring semester are extremely limited. MS assistantships are generally awarded for a maximum period of two years (the normal completion period for a Master's Degree) contingent upon adequate progress toward the degree. Additionally, assistantships can be withdrawn at the end of

any semester if a student is demonstrably not carrying out his/her assigned duties. Duties normally include lab teaching, lab assistant duties, classroom assistance (grading, etc.) and limited research and service assistance. Duties are designed to account for 20 hours per week and the assistantship period is from August 15 to May 15. All students on assistantship will receive a 9-month stipend plus paid tuition for up to 21 hours of graduate credit per year. The stipend is paid in 10 installments (1/2 check August 31, full checks Sept-April, 1/2 check May 15.) Students interested in assistantships should contact the department for the current level of the Master's and PhD stipends.

---

## REQUIREMENTS FOR MS in GEOLOGY

- 30 graduate course credit hours to include 24 hours of coursework and 6 hours of thesis (see section on thesis research)
  - All course work, thesis topic, and final thesis must be approved by the student's thesis committee.
  - Core courses which must be completed by all students include a minimum of 12 graduate-level hours selected in the areas of geomorphology, geophysics, geochemistry and stratigraphy as detailed on the [Graduate Catalog](#)
  - Students must complete a total of 18 hours of Geosciences Courses including those listed above and 2 hour GEOS 560V Research Methods
  - The remaining course work may include electives in Geology or other disciplines as approved by the student's thesis committee. See the [graduate Geosciences catalog](#)
- for a list of all classes.
  - Students who have already fulfilled some or all of the core courses as part of their undergraduate degree may substitute other electives in consultation with their advisory or thesis committee.
  - Students must complete all course work with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.
  - Students must present a written proposal to their thesis committee detail the proposed research to be completed.
  - Students must present an oral presentation of their thesis proposal to their committee at least two months prior to their thesis defense.
  - Students must satisfactorily pass a comprehensive oral examination of their thesis.

---

## REQUIREMENTS FOR MS in GEOGRAPHY

Requires a total of 30 semester hours. A minimum of 24 semester hours of course work (including a 7-hour core and 6 hours of quantitative or computational electives), six semester hours of thesis, and a comprehensive examination (defense of thesis) conducted by the candidate's thesis committee are required for all students who obtain an M.S. in Geography.

Core courses (9 hours) include GEOS 5093 History and Philosophy of Geography, 2 hour GEOS 560V Research Methods and GEOS 5011 Colloquium.

Quantitative and computational electives (minimum of 6 hours) include GEOS 5043 Foundations of Geospatial Data Analysis, GEOS 5083 Geospatial Data Mining, GEOS 5513 Introduction to GIS Programming, GEOS 5863 Quantitative Techniques in Geosciences, and other courses listed in the MS Geography program requirements in the Graduate Catalog. Some quantitative and/or computational courses that are not in the Graduate Catalog may also be approved by a Department of Geosciences Chair-appointed committee.

---

## REQUIREMENTS FOR PhD in GEOSCIENCES

Course Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree:

- 24 course hours beyond the U of A MS/MA degree or equivalent.
- 2 hour GEOS 560V Research Methods
- It is strongly recommended that two courses be taken outside of the Department that are supplementary to the students interests and dissertation topic. These may be 3000-level undergraduate courses, if approved by the Advisory/Thesis Committee and the Graduate School.
- No more than 3 hours of Special Problems or Independent Research
- Dissertation hours 18 hours to be taken after admission to candidacy.
- Any waivers to these requirements must be appealed to the Advisory or Doctoral Dissertation Committee and the departmental Graduate Adviser.
- Students should also be aware of Graduate School requirements with regard to doctoral degrees.

- The student must maintain a 3.0 GPA in course work taken for the PhD degree.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is primarily a research degree, but communication of that research is critical for professional development and required for most professional pursuits. To promote development of the communication skills, each student is required to teach labs and/or a course for at least one semester and to present scientific results at one or more national or international professional meetings.

### Committees

There are three committees for the PhD degree:

1. Doctoral Advisory Committee  
4-6 members, semester 1
2. Candidacy Exam Committee  
4-6 members, semester 3
3. Doctoral Dissertation Committee  
3-5 members, after Candidacy Exam

### Candidacy Exams

The comprehensive examinations consist of two rigorous examinations: **1) a written comprehensive examination and 2) an oral defense of the dissertation proposal.** Both examinations are intended to evaluate the level of scholarship of the student by assessing the student's command of information learned in required courses and determining the adequacy of the student's intellectual preparation to engage in significant research leading to completion of the dissertation. As such, successful completion of these examinations marks an important milestone in the student's progress toward the degree as she/he makes a transition from largely classroom-oriented study to independent research that is the hallmark of the doctoral tradition of academic achievement.

Students will take the Comprehensive Written Examination after they have completed the Graduate School residency requirement and have completed the required departmental core courses. The exam will be taken during the fall or spring semester when classes are in session, but not during final exams. At the time of the exam, the student must have a grade point average of 3.25 on 12 or more hours of course work taken beyond the master's degree. This exam must be taken at least one year prior to completing all requirements for the degree.

The Comprehensive Written Examination will be composed of two written works to be completed during a 30-day period at the beginning of the student's 3rd semester of enrollment in the Ph.D. program. This includes **1) a review paper and 2) a grant proposal in National Science Foundation style.**

The Chair of the Candidacy Exam Committee will provide a written memo to the Graduate Coordinator indicating the starting date of the student's examination. No extensions to this time frame will be permitted except under the most extraordinary conditions. The first of the required written works will be a comprehensive, scholarly review of a topic relevant to the student's intended dissertation research. This written work will examine in critical detail extant knowledge in this topic area, significant concepts and controversies related to this topic, and gaps in knowledge related to this topic that may lead to new, innovative

research to enhance knowledge related to this topic. It is expected that the quality of this review paper will be such that it could be submitted for peer review to a relevant academic journal with minor or no revision. The paper should conform to formatting requirements of a specific academic journal to be determined and agreed upon by the Candidacy Exam Committee. The paper should be of page length appropriate for that journal, double-spaced, with full citations, figures and tables compiled at the end of the manuscript. A typical manuscript prepared for submission to an academic journal will be approximately 25-30 pages of text with tables, figures, and references cited added as necessary.

The second written work to be assessed by the Candidacy Exam Committee will be a research proposal composed by the student in the format typical of a National Science Foundation grant proposal. It is expected that the document will conform to all proposal formatting requirements as specified in the [NSF Grant Proposal Guide](#). In order to make the writing tasks for this examination more manageable, proposals prepared by students will contain only the following sections as specified in the NSF Grant proposal Guide (GPG):

- 1) Project summary (NSF GPG item 2b)
- 2) Project description (NSF GPG item 2d)
- 3) References cited (NSF GPG item 2e)
- 4) 2-page biographical sketch (NSF GPG item 2f)
- 5) Budget (GA salary, fringe benefits, travel, materials/supplies, other direct costs, facilities & administration costs, tuition)
- 6) Facilities and Equipment (this will be short, but should include access to computers, software, field equipment and vehicles of various kinds, instrumentation such as microscopes or other analytical devices)

The project description (including text, figures, tables) cannot exceed 15 single-spaced pages. The proposal should provide a detailed description of research of interest to the student, preferably related to the student's dissertation, and should be hypothesis driven. The specific topic of the proposal should be agreed upon by the Candidacy Exam Committee in consultation with the student.

The number of faculty members on the examining committee will be no less than four and no more than six. Should the student not pass the first exam, the student will have a second and final opportunity at a later date to be determined by the examining committee. Additional work may be required.

Upon completion of the written works, the student will provide each member of the Candidacy Exam Committee with a copy (either hard copy or electronic version if requested by committee members). It is the duty of the Candidacy Exam Committee to review both documents objectively, critically, and fairly to assess the student's preparation and scholarship regarding the assigned topics. Upon review of the written works, the committee will convene to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the written works and to determine the student's overall performance in completing the assigned tasks. Evaluation will take the form of qualitative statements of "Excellent", "Very Good", "Good", "Fair" or "Poor". Following evaluation of the written works, the committee will report directly their

assessment to the student and the Graduate Coordinator. Students must receive passing assessments (“Good” or better) on both written assignments from at least 4 of the 5 committee members in order to be permitted to move on to the next phase of the qualifying examinations (oral defense of dissertation proposal).

### Dissertation Proposal

Upon admission to candidacy (passing the

Comprehensive Written Exam), the student will present to his/her Doctoral Dissertation Committee a written AND oral proposal of the dissertation topic for comment, suggestions, and approval. The dissertation advisor will chair the committee, unless prohibited by Graduate School conflict of interest rules. Successful completion of the proposal defense requires the positive vote of the committee. Normally this proposal will be completed by the third or fourth semester after matriculation and can only be delayed with the approval of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee and the appropriate departmental Graduate Advisor.

---

## REQUIREMENTS FOR MS in SPAC

A student may choose to obtain the MS degree in Space and Planetary Sciences with a concentration in Geology or Geography. For specific program requirements, please see the Graduate Catalog of Studies or the webpage for [Space and Planetary Sciences](#).

---

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A CONCENTRATION IN SPAC

A student may choose to obtain either the MS in Geology or the MA in Geography with a concentration in Space and Planetary Sciences. The student must fulfill all degree requirements for the Geology MS or Geography MA

plus the concentration in Space and Planetary Sciences. For information on Space and Planetary Sciences, please see the [Degree Programs page](#) for the interdisciplinary Space and Planetary Sciences program

---

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

All students are assigned an advisor on entering the program. **During the first semester** a student should ascertain which faculty member in the program would provide the best direction for his/her program and, in consultation with that person should establish a three person advisory committee for the MS programs and a five person advisory committee for the PhD program. The chair of the advisory committee may or may not become the student’s principal advisor. The role of the principal advisor is to guide the student’s program, both in terms of course selection and thesis research. Students should file their [Master’s Committee form](#) (under “Master’s Student Forms”) with the Graduate School no later than the first week of the second semester.

Once the committee has been formed, the student should maintain regular contact with the principal advisor and should keep the rest of the committee informed of his/her program progress on a monthly basis. Composition of the advisory committee varies by program.

In Geology, the committee can be made up of faculty

entirely from the Geology division, or can include an outside member of the principal advisor wishes.

In Geography, the committee must include a member from outside the division of Geography.

All faculty who serve on graduate committees must have graduate faculty status - it is not the responsibility of the student to ensure this, but it is useful if the student reminds the advisor of this fact as the committee is formed. The advisory committee is generally also the thesis committee but can be changed easily. However, once the thesis committee form has been submitted to the Graduate School it becomes more difficult to change the composition of the committee. The thesis committee form is identical to the advisory committee form and the two can be submitted as a single document. If, however, the initial Master’s Committee form has been submitted **ONLY** for the advisory committee, it will need to be resubmitted for the thesis committee (even if the composition of the committees is the same).

---

## THESIS RESEARCH

The primary requirement for almost all students in the program will be the satisfactory fulfillment of the thesis or dissertation. Students should begin to discuss possible topics as soon as they have identified an appropriate principal advisor. As soon as a proposal has been identified, the [Master’s Thesis Title form](#) or the [PhD Dissertation Title form](#) should be submitted to the Graduate School. Any student planning to undertake research of human (i.e. survey research) or animal subjects or the use and storage of radioactive, toxic, or

biohazardous substances must file the relevant forms and obtain prior approval from the appropriate Campus Research Compliance Committee before beginning Research. The student must file these forms before he/she submits the Thesis or Dissertation Title form. The thesis must report the results of an original research problem on a topic, and using methodology approved by the principal advisor and the rest of the thesis or dissertation committee.

MS students must complete at least 6 credit hours of thesis and may not begin to take thesis hours until the

Thesis Committee form has been filed with the Graduate School. **PhD students must complete at least 18 hours of dissertation credit to be taken after admission to candidacy.** MS students should anticipate filing their Thesis Committee form at the beginning of their third

semester. PhD students should file their Dissertation form after completion of the candidacy exams. At the absolute latest, students must file the form *at least three months prior* to their anticipated defense date to allow sufficient time for the committee to have input into the thesis.

---

## RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

The University of Arkansas has established six committees to facilitate the review process designed to protect the rights and welfare of research participants and provide guidance on research integrity issues. The guidelines are dictated by state and federal laws and by policies of funding agencies. The six committees are: the Institutional Review Board (human subjects), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, the Institutional Biosafety Committee, the Radiation Safety Committee, the Toxic Substances Committee, and the Conflict of Interest and Commitment Oversight Committee.

Students who engage in research that potentially requires review by any of these committees must file the appropriate forms and obtain approval by the relevant committee prior to initiating the research. Additional information is available [on line](#). Students should discuss with their major advisors if their research requires prior approval from one of these committees. If students and/or faculty advisors are unsure if approval is required, they can contact the Research Compliance officer in the Research and Sponsored Programs office.

---

## FINAL EXAMINATIONS/DEFENSE

Final examinations for all students will take the form of an oral defense conducted by the student's Committee. Students should anticipate turning the drafts of their thesis into their principal advisor until he/she determines that it is ready to be submitted to the rest of the committee. At that point the student should anticipate at least one month turn-around before the defense can be scheduled. Thus, a student who wishes to graduate in the Spring semester should turn in the defense copy of his/her thesis or dissertation to the committee no later than mid-March (see timetable in Miscellaneous). Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, following agreement by the student and his/her committee. The time and date of the defense must

be posted at least 5 business days in advance. The defense will consist of a short presentation of the research by the student followed by an open period of questions from the general audience. The committee can then dismiss the general audience and close the defense to allow a period of questions from the committee. The student must bring the three signature pages for the thesis or dissertation (see the Graduate School Instructions for Thesis form) and the [Record of Progress form](#) to the defense. The signature pages will be signed and returned to the student when the final draft is approved and ready to be turned into the Graduate School.

---

## SUBMITTING THE COMPLETED THESIS or DISSERTATION

Students must adhere to the official [Graduate School guide on theses and dissertations](#). After the document is accepted by the graduate school, information is mailed to the student regarding the digital submission.

The Department of Geosciences requests that each student donate one loose-bound paper copy of their final thesis or dissertation, suitable for binding for the department's library.

---

## GRADUATION

A student cannot be cleared for graduation until an application for the degree has been filed and the appropriate graduation fee has been paid ([details here](#)).

If the student does not graduate in the indicated semester, the student must reapply for graduation by contacting the Registrar's office. Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for specific deadline dates.

The University of Arkansas offers a number of ceremonies for graduates who have completed graduation requirements. Graduate students are recognized at the All-University Commencement ceremony. Degree applicants for the future summer and fall semester *may* participate

with approval of their advisor. A student can have their diploma presented by an immediate family member (spouse, parent, child) who is a member of the academic faculty at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Please contact the Graduate School for arrangements.

The Graduate School makes the effort to include as many graduate students in the Commencement Program as possible. Keep in mind that there are printing deadlines. Students are told that their name will be included if they apply for graduation by late February. All past degree recipients for the academic year are automatically included.

---

## HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The following description is excerpted from the Graduate Catalog of Studies of the University of Arkansas and repeated in this handbook to ensure that students in Master Program in the Department of Geosciences understand their responsibilities and the gravity of any infractions. The All University Judiciary is defined, and its composition described in the [UA Graduate Student Handbook](#).

The mission of the Graduate School is to provide post-baccalaureate students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study, teaching, and research in an environment that promotes freedom of expression, intellectual inquiry, and professional integrity. This mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity are taken for granted.

The graduate student at the University of Arkansas is expected to a) know and abide by the regulations for all students, as described in the Student Handbook published by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and b) know and abide by the regulations contained within the Academic Honesty Policy for Graduate Students and the Research

Misconduct Policy. It is expected that graduate students will refrain from all acts of academic and research dishonesty and will furthermore report to the Graduate School any acts witnessed.

The pledge of the Honor Code is this: “On my honor as a graduate student at the University of Arkansas, I certify that I will neither give nor receive inappropriate assistance on the work I do for my degree.” Students will be asked to sign this pledge when they are admitted to the Graduate School. Faculty may also require students to sign this pledge before completing the requirements of a course or a program of study. Students will be asked to sign this pledge upon admittance to the Graduate School. Faculty, Department Chairs and/or Program Directors may also require students to sign this pledge before completing the requirements of a course or a program of study. The Department of Geosciences requires that students sign this pledge. They further require that the signed pledge be placed in the student’s file. Lack of a signed pledge on file in the Department office may result in delay of graduation from the Master Program.

---

## ANNUAL ACADEMIC REVIEWS

Near the end of the second semester of the student's program, he/she will meet with their committee advisor to establish that the student is making adequate progress toward the degree. A record of this meeting, the annual [Academic Review form](#) (under Student Academic Progress Forms) including date, attendance and outcome, will be placed in the student’s file. Unsatisfactory progress may result in the student receiving a warning. Progress can be assessed again after one additional semester and lack of improvement may result in the withdrawal of assistantship support.

At a minimum the review will examine progress toward completing required course work with the minimum GPA defined by the Graduate School, completing thesis/dissertation requirements including but not limited to establishing Advisory and Thesis/Dissertation Committees as prescribed in the Geosciences Graduate Handbook, preparing a formal, written thesis proposal as prescribed in the Geosciences Graduate Handbook, conducting an initial meeting with members of the Advisory and Thesis/Dissertation committees as prescribed in the Geosciences Graduate Handbook, conducting research related to the thesis/dissertation, writing the thesis/dissertation, and completing other specified requirements for the degree (e.g. satisfactory evaluations of teaching, participation in the Department or University of Arkansas service activities, etc).

The *Annual Academic Review* will be enacted by the Department of Geosciences using the following procedure: During the spring semester of each academic year, each graduate student will be reminded to initiate a meeting with his/her advisor for the purpose of evaluating student progress toward the degree. The student should plan sufficiently so that this review can be completed on or before April 15.

The *Annual Academic Review* will consist of a face-to-

face interview with the student. In situations where it may be impractical to meet the student face-to-face, the review may be conducted with the advisor via telephone or email correspondence, or other vehicle agreed to by the involved parties.

Upon completion of the review, the advisor will articulate his/her assessment regarding progress toward the degree directly to the student by indicating that the student is making normal progress, adequate progress, or inadequate progress. **Normal** and **Adequate progress** is defined as a combination of the items listed below appropriate to the student’s seniority and assistantship responsibilities within the program:

1. Establishing an advisory or thesis/dissertation committee.
2. Completing required core courses during the first year of enrollment and residence, satisfying any academic deficiencies.
3. Completing the required hours of course work per academic year, or comparable work toward completion of the degree.
4. Maintaining a minimum GPA as required by the graduate school and the individual departmental degree program.
5. Be working with advisor to secure funding for research leading to the thesis, making significant progress toward defining a thesis/dissertation topic.
6. Being in the process of writing a formal thesis proposal to be presented to advisory or thesis/dissertation committee.
7. Working with advisor to secure funding for research leading to the thesis/dissertation.
8. Conducting research related to the thesis/dissertation.
9. Writing thesis/dissertation.

10. Being on pace to complete the degree in required time frame (4 semester for MA and MS, 6 to 8 semesters for PhD.)
11. Performing assistantship duties satisfactorily.

**Inadequate progress** toward the degree is defined as a combination of the items listed below appropriate to the student's seniority within the program:

1. Core courses not completed during first 3 semesters of enrollment
2. Less than 12 hours of coursework per academic year or comparable work toward completion of the degree
3. Minimum grade point average falls below 2.85
4. Not being on schedule to complete degree during the 5th semester of enrollment (i.e. in 2.5 years)
5. Not establishing an Advisory or Thesis Committee
6. Not making significant progress toward defining a thesis topic
7. Not writing a formal thesis proposal to be presented to advisory or thesis committees
8. Not performing teaching duties satisfactorily
9. Academic deficiencies not satisfied

Following the *Annual Academic Review*, the form will be completed to include written comments regarding the student's progress, as well as recommendations for continued progress or recommendations to remediate inadequate progress within a realistic time frame (since the review occurs during late spring semester, either end of summer or midway through fall semester might be a reasonable time frame.) At the conclusion of the review, the student and advisor will sign the form, and copies will be distributed to the student, the advisor, and the Chair of Geosciences. The *Annual Academic Review* forms will become part of the student's permanent file.

The Chair of Geosciences will report the progress of each student in the program to the Graduate Committee, including necessary remediation steps for those students whose progress was evaluated as inadequate. The Graduate Committee will make the final decision regarding student progress. Once this final decision is rendered, the Chair will

forward the original signed review forms of all students to the Graduate School for inclusion in the students' permanent files.

***Students who refuse to participate in the review process will be placed on short term probationary status while reasons for their refusal are heard.*** If adequate cause for refusing the review cannot be determined, and the student still refuses to participate in *Annual Academic Reviews*, a statement reporting the student's refusal to be reviewed will be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School, and dismissal proceedings will be initiated.

If a student who receives an evaluation of inadequate progress fails to meet the minimum remedial steps specified by the review committee within the specified time frame, a *Report-of-Non-Progress* will be provided to the Chair of Geosciences by the Chair of the student's evaluation committee (ordinarily the principal advisor.) This report will provide details of the failed steps.

1. The *Report-of-Non-Progress* will be treated as confidential information and will be forwarded to members of the Graduate Committee for review. If a majority of the Graduate Committee members agree with the findings of the *Report-of-Non-Progress*, this report will be forwarded to the Graduate School for additional action
2. At each stage of this process, the student will be informed by the Chair of Geosciences about what actions are being taken. The student may appeal decisions regarding inadequate progress in accord with guidelines of the Graduate School at the University of Arkansas through the formal grievance process.

In developing guidelines for the *Annual Academic Review*, the Department of Geosciences recognizes that extenuating circumstances of employment, research funding, or other relevant conditions may impact on student progress. As such, the Department of Geosciences reserves the right to consider such circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

## ACADEMIC DISMISSAL / ACADEMIC PROBATION

Graduate degree programs have the right to dismiss graduate students who a) do not make adequate academic progress; b) engage in academic or research misconduct; or c) engage in illegal, fraudulent, or unethical behavior as defined in the Code of Student Life. There may also be other unusual situations in which a student may be dismissed from a degree program. In each case, the dismissal should follow the following procedures:

**Lack of Adequate Academic Progress** - Students may be dismissed per the academic probation policy of the Graduate School, and students should familiarize themselves with this policy. In addition, students who have not been placed on probation, but who are not making adequate academic progress must be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal. They will be given a clear statement about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the

problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students in the program. If the student does not meet the requirements within the time frame specified, he/she may be dismissed by the degree program with notification to the student and the Graduate School. Students dismissed in this way will not necessarily be dismissed by the Graduate School. Students may appeal this dismissal to the Graduate School, following the procedures outlined in the Graduate Student Grievance Policy.

**Academic or Research Misconduct/Illegal, Fraudulent, or Unethical Behavior** - The process for dismissing students as a result of academic or research misconduct; or as a result of illegal, fraudulent, or unethical behavior is outlined in the Code of Student Life.



Other Situations - Departments may dismiss students for situations other than those specified above. When doing so, the department must notify the student in writing of the possibility of dismissal. If it is possible for the student to rectify the situation, he/she must be given a clear statement about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students in the program. If the student does not meet the requirements within the time frame specified, he/she may be dismissed by the degree program with notification to the student and the Graduate School. Students dismissed in this

way will not necessarily be dismissed by the Graduate School.

If the situation cannot be rectified, the student will be notified in writing of the grounds for dismissal and the date when the dismissal will be effective. This will normally be the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled, but the circumstances of the dismissal will be important in determining this date.

Students may appeal their dismissal to the Graduate School, following the procedures outlined in the Graduate Student Grievance Policy.

---

## ASSISTANTSHIP CONTRACTS

All students who receive assistantships have a number of responsibilities in the department. Assistantships are 9-month appointments which begin on August 15 and end each year on May 15. Students should expect to be available in the Department throughout that period. It is expected that students will be absent from the end of finals week in December until the week before classes start in January. All new students should report to the main office by August 15 to ascertain what their assigned duties will be. Returning students should report either to the main office or to their supervisors sometime during the week before classes begin. During the semester, students are

expected to fulfill their duties in a professional and competent manner. Lab TAs may only be absent in an emergency (or for professional commitments such as conferences) and must have made arrangements to have some other qualified student cover their labs. Non-teaching TAs must clear any absences with their supervisor. All TAs must discuss their work schedule with their supervisors before classes begin and they must post their work schedules in a visible location outside their offices and must be present in the department during those scheduled hours. Failure to fulfill any of these conditions is grounds for the withdrawal of assistantships.

---

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Graduate Students are encouraged and expected to take part in the student activities of the department. There are many organizations that encompass both graduate and undergraduate students. SGE and GTU are the honor societies for Geology and Geography respectively, and graduate students are an integral part of these organizations. In addition, the local Association of Women Geoscientists (AWG) chapter (hAWG) offers outreach activities, research support, and field support. There are also student chapters of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) and the Society of Exploration Geophysicists (SEG). These organizations provide extensive service and social opportunities for all graduate students.

**Office Space** A limited number of desks are available for Geoscience (GEOS) graduate students and ENDY/SPAC PhD students with a Geoscience advisor. Spaces are allocated by the Chair of the Department in consultation with the Graduate Advisor(s) according to the following criteria:

1. Funded GEOS PhD (TA, DAF, DDF, RA)
2. Funded GEOS MS (TA, RA)
3. Funded ENDY/SPAC PhD
4. Unfunded GEOS PhD
5. Unfunded ENDY/SPAC PhD
6. Unfunded GEOS MS

Limited space means that office space is rarely

allocated to any student that is not receiving department support (i.e. only priorities 1, 2, 3, and 4 get desk space.) Non-teaching GAs include all students on research assistantships (RAs.)

Students will be informed that they have desk space close to the start of classes. The allocation of individual desks is decided by the Chair in consultation with faculty members who are the supervisors of the students and the Graduate Advisor(s). You will retain your desk from one semester to the next unless notified by the Chair or your supervisor.

**Good Citizenship** The Department of Geosciences has limited space to accommodate classrooms, laboratories, as well as the offices of faculty, staff and student offices. The student offices typically house desks or cubicles for several students, resulting in space shared by many. It is imperative that everyone treat his/her neighbor with respect to ensure tranquility and a comfortable environment for study and research. Do not take over unclaimed space. If additional storage is necessary for scientific samples, contact the Department Chair or your major advisor. Do not rearrange the furniture, which is ergonomically placed, taking into consideration privacy, efficiency, overall space, and common work areas. Do not display materials that others may find offensive. Do not borrow items from fellow students without their permission. Be good citizens toward your colleagues in the

Department of Geosciences.

**Pets** Pets of any kind are prohibited in University of Arkansas buildings. Exceptions are granted only in the case of service animals for people with disabilities and animals used by academic departments for approved research projects, teaching purposes and artistic performances.

**Alcohol** Alcohol is prohibited in any space occupied by the Department of Geosciences. This includes individual student, staff, and faculty offices, as well as laboratories, classrooms, and department vans. The policy is in keeping with that of the general alcohol policy of the University of Arkansas.

**Department Colloquium** Graduate students are

expected to attend the Geosciences colloquium on Friday afternoons at 3:05 pm throughout each semester. Other colloquia may occur throughout the semester, and graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend all that their schedule will permit.

**Professional Activities** The faculty of the Department of Geosciences expect that graduate students will be active in professional activities, particularly in professional meetings. Both Geology and Geography offer local, regional, and national meetings and the Graduate School offers limited travel funds for students who present papers at national meetings.

---

## DEPARTMENT VANS

Vans are an integral part of the Department of Geosciences. As with all department equipment, vans are to be used only when authorized and only for legitimate university business. Priorities are for field trips associated with GEOL, GEOG, and GEOS classes. Vans must be reserved and signed out in the log book maintained by the Geosciences Office, Gearhart Hall room 216. As a graduate student, particularly if you are a TA, you may be asked to drive a van for a field trip. To be eligible to drive a department van, you must have a clean driving record and a valid driver's license. A [Student Authorization to Operate Vehicles form](#) must be completed, signed and submitted to the Office of Risk Management prior to driving any

Geoscience vehicle.

Prior to departing on a field trip outside of Washington County, Arkansas, the filing of forms for insurance purposes is required (see office staff). Students engaged in travel and/or field work should familiarize themselves with [university insurance coverage](#). Keys for the vans are checked-out from the Geosciences office, Gearhart Hall 216 when the proper forms are completed. The forms must be turned in to the office forty-eight (48) hours prior to departure to insure that the information is conveyed to the proper campus entities.

---

## GEOSCIENCES WEB SITE AND FACULTY

The Geosciences Department [web site](#) contains a current and [complete list](#) of Faculty (with research concentrations), instructors and staff.

---

## SIGMA XI SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HONORARY SOCIETY

Any student doing research is eligible for membership in Sigma Xi, the research society. Students must be nominated by two members with current membership. Benefits include a subscription to *American Scientist*, a

journal that highlights ongoing research. Dr. Cleaveland is the departmental representative for Sigma Xi and would be happy to nominate or second the nomination of any student active in research.

---

## SIGMA GAMMA EPSILON – NATIONAL GEOLOGY HONOR SOCIETY

The **Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon** (ΣΓΕ), also SGE, is a national honor society organized in 1915 to recognize scholarship in the earth sciences. The University of Arkansas chapter is Alpha Psi.

SGE membership is open to any person in any branch of the Earth Sciences, who has completed at least 10 semester hours of Earth Science courses with a minimum 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 system), and an overall GPA of 2.67 for all college courses. Persons meeting those qualifications who wish to join SGE may inform any of the society's officers or the Faculty Advisor of the Alpha Psi chapter. Typically, initiation of new members is held in both the Fall and Spring semesters. There is a one-time initiation fee of \$25.00. Once initiated, a person is a member of the SGE for life, however, while students pay annual National Dues of \$15.00, plus any local chapter dues, and receive *The Compass*. After graduation, a person may become an Active

Alumni Member by a payment of \$15.00 per year to the National Office, or a single fee of \$175.00 for a lifetime.

Members of SGE serve our department by organizing field trips, preparing and renting rock bags for General Geology students, policing the road at the north entrance to Devil's Den State Park, organizing the Spring Awards banquet, and other service activities. Members of Sigma Gamma Epsilon are encouraged to submit articles to the Society's professional journal, *The Compass*, as it provides the opportunity to share your research with members of the Society. As an associated society of the Geological Society of America, Sigma Gamma Epsilon members are entitled to GSA-member rates for registration at national and regional meetings and for purchase of GSA publications.

Each chapter of Sigma Gamma Epsilon bestows two awards on members annually. The *W. A. Tarr Award* honors

William Arthur Tarr (1881-1939), a highly regarded professor of geology at the University of Missouri, Columbia, and longtime editor of the SGE publication *The Compass*. The

*Austin A. Sartin Award* was established by student delegates to the 34th National Convention (1992) as an award for the best poster presented at the annual GSA convention.

### **General Degree Checklist**

This is general guide/timeline for MS and PhD Degrees and is subject to change. Degree requirements and timing described by the Graduate School should be considered the official requirements and timeline. You can find an official timelines and degree requirements and regulation in the [Graduate School Student Handbook](#).

#### **MS – Degree checklist**

- 30 graduate course credits
  - 24 credit hours of coursework
  - 6 credit hours of thesis research
- Advisory Committee Form
- Thesis Committee Form and Thesis Title Form
- Annual Academic Progress Form (every spring)
- Thesis proposal presentation
- Written thesis proposal
- Thesis comprehensive oral examination/defense
- Written thesis – submitted to graduate school

#### **Max Deadline**

- End of 1<sup>st</sup> semester
- End of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
- Every Spring
- End of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
- End of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
- End of 4<sup>th</sup> semester
- End of 4<sup>th</sup> semester

#### **PhD – degree checklist**

- 24 course hours beyond MS degree = 54 credit hours
    - GEOS 5023 – Technical and Proposal Writing
    - (2 courses should be outside of GEOS)
  - Advisory Committee Form
  - Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form and Dissertation Title Form
  - Completion of 12 credit hours – prior to qualification of candidacy
  - Annual academic progress form (every spring)
  - PhD Candidacy exams (GPA must be at 3.25 on 12 credit hours)
    - Written comprehensive exam (30 days to complete the exam)
    - Grant proposal
    - Review paper
    - Oral defense of dissertation proposal (after successful completion of written exam)
  - Completion of 18 PhD credit hours\* – after qualification of candidacy.
  - Dissertation defense
  - Written dissertation – submitted to graduate school
- \*Note, after promotion to candidacy, you must be continuously enrolled in courses.

#### **Deadline**

- End of 1<sup>nd</sup> semester
- End of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
- End of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
- Every Spring
- End of 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semester

**Failure to meet these deadlines may result in a delay of graduation, probation, or dismissal from the program.**



# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

## DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCES

I certify that I have read and agree to abide by the procedures and guidelines established in this Graduate Student Handbook in Geosciences. In addition, I will follow the Honor Code of the Graduate School of the University of Arkansas:

“On my honor as a graduate student at the University of Arkansas, I certify that I will neither give nor receive inappropriate assistance on the work I do for my degree.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
(printed or typewritten name of student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of Department Chair)