

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

Department of Geography



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Introduction

The Department of Geography has prepared this convenient handbook to assist you in completing your master's program in geography, and to communicate major policies and procedures that affect our graduate students. Much information is also available elsewhere on the department's webpage (www.ohio.edu/cas/geography/). Thoroughly familiarize yourself with this handbook's contents and the department's webpage, and refer to both as questions arise. If you need further assistance, do not hesitate to consult the graduate committee chair or your advisor. You should also read the section about the geography program in the current OU graduate catalog. For guidance on what is expected of you as a member of the Ohio University community, review the student code of conduct, including information regarding academic misconduct, found online at the Division of Student Affairs, Department of Community Standards (www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm).

The Department of Geography offers several possible specialties at the graduate level:

- Cultural-Political Ecology
- Cultural-Historical Geography
- Economic Development/Globalization
- Gender and Development
- Migration
- Urban Geography
- Land Use and Environmental Planning
- Geographical Techniques (GIS, Geovisualization)
- Biogeography
- Climatology and Meteorology
- Geomorphology
- Environmental Assessment
- Resource Management and Sustainability
- Agriculture and Food Resources

The geography master's program typically requires two years (four semesters) to complete and consists of coursework as well as researching and writing a thesis under faculty supervision. Graduate students receive credit only for classes at the **5000 level or higher**; courses at the 4000 level or lower are not graduate level.

Advising

Individual welcome interviews for new graduate students and a group orientation for all geography graduate students and faculty take place just prior to fall semester, usually on the Friday before classes start. Welcome interviews acquaint the graduate committee with our new students and serve as each student's initial advising session for developing a program of study. During the welcome interview you will be assigned an interim academic advisor. This faculty member will be your **temporary advisor** until you arrange for a faculty member to supervise your thesis; your thesis supervisor will then serve as your academic advisor. Your academic advisor, whether interim or permanent, helps you select courses, plan your program of study, assess options, and strategize on handling any academic deficiencies noted in the welcome interview. Your academic advisor is available to answer your questions and offer academic advice.

Determining who will become your thesis supervisor results from your conversations with individual geography professors whose interests dovetail with yours. Once you have identified a faculty member you would like as your supervisor, you must ask if they would agree to assume the responsibilities of serving in that capacity. The thesis advisor should specialize or have expertise in the systematic geographic subfield, method, or technique that will be the focus of your thesis. If, after identifying a permanent advisor, your primary research interests change substantially such that they might be represented better by a different professor, it may be possible to change advisors.

Program of Study

The department offers a Master of Arts (MA) and a Master of Science (MS) degree in geography. Table 1 lists the course and credit hour requirements for the two degrees.

TABLE 1. Geography MA and MS Course Requirements

Total Credit Hours: 40 hours minimum to consist of the following:

- Thesis hours (12 credit hours min.):
GEOG 6950 Thesis

- One required course (4 credit hours):
GEOG 5000 Geographic Research and Writing

- One method/technique course from the following list (4 credit hours):
GEOG 5600 Cartography I
GEOG 5610 Cartography II
GEOG 5650 Air Photo Interpretation
GEOG 5660 Remote Sensing
GEOG 5670 Advanced Remote Sensing
GEOG 5710 Quantitative Methods
GEOG 5711 Qualitative Methods in Geography
GEOG 5712 Field Methods
GEOG 5730 Principles of GIS
GEOG 5740 GIS Design & Application Development
GEOG 5750 GIS & Landscape Analysis
GEOG 5760 Geographic Information Analysis

- Two seminars (min. 8 credit hours): [With permission, one seminar can be from outside Geography]

For the MS degree select at least one of the two seminars from:

GEOG 6010 Seminar in Atmospheric Science
GEOG 6150 Seminar in Geomorphology
GEOG 6160 Seminar in Biogeography
GEOG 6660 Seminar in Cartography
GEOG 6730 Seminar in GIScience

- Other graduate-level courses (min. 12 hours): [With permission, one course can be from outside Geography]
GEOG 5030, 5040, 5910, 5911, 6930, 6950, OPIE, & ELIP courses do not count

For the MS degree select at least two (any two) of these GEOG courses:

5010 Meteorology	5580 Environmental Hazards
5020 Climatology	5600 Cartography I
5060 Synoptic Meteorology	5610 Cartography II
5070 Mesoscale Meteorology	5650 Air Photo Interpretation
5080 Dynamic Meteorology I	5660 Principles of Remote Sensing
5090 Dynamic Meteorology II	5670 Advanced Remote Sensing
5050 Physical Meteorology	5710 Quantitative Methods
5110 Advanced Physical Geog.	5712 Field Methods in Geography
5130 Arid Lands Physical Geog.	5730 Principles of GIS
5150 Landforms & Landscapes	5740 GIS Design & Application Development
5160 Biogeography	5750 GIS & Landscape Analysis
5170 Landscape Ecology	5760 Geographic Information Analysis
5530 Env. Planning & Assessment	

Credit Hour and Course Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of **40 hours** of graduate credit, consisting of at least 12 hours of thesis credit and 28 credit hours of courses. The 28 credit hours count includes required courses, seminars, and the other approved graduate courses selected by the student. At 4 credit hours per course, this is seven courses. At least five of these courses must be offered in the Department of Geography. Hours in GEOG 5030, 5040, 5910, 5911, 6930, and 6950 are excluded from the count toward 40, as are credits from classes in the Ohio University Program in Intensive English (OPIE), English Language Improvement (ELIP), other language coursework, and any course that you audit. It is your responsibility to know whether a course counts toward the degree or not.

The department requires all students to complete **Geographic Research and Writing (GEOG 5000)**, and to do so in their first fall semester. All students are required to take at least **one method/technique course**, selected in consultation with their advisor. You must complete at least **two graduate seminars** totaling at least 8 hours of credit. Ideally, seminars give you an opportunity to do some preliminary work on a thesis topic or to acquire a deeper understanding of the geographic subfields in which you are most interested. With committee approval, and a record of this in the student's departmental file, one of the two seminars can be taken outside of the department. If possible, seminars should be completed no later than the fall term of your second year. In addition, all graduate students must enroll **each semester** in the 1 credit hour **Colloquium in Geography (GEOG 5911)**.

We encourage students to take courses in cognate fields. For example, if you are interested in historical geography, you may wish to take a graduate class in History, or if you are interested in biogeography, you may want to take a relevant course from the Department of Environmental and Plant Biology.

Graduate students who receive a tuition scholarship as part of a financial aid award (e.g., TA, GA, RA, GRS), are expected to enroll in **18 credit hours per semester**. In your first year, this typically consists of three courses (12 credit hours), the one-credit colloquium (GEOG 5911), and five credit hours of thesis research (GEOG 6950) each semester. In the second year, with most of your courses completed, you will enroll in a larger number of thesis credit hours per semester. As a result, by the end of your program, you will have signed up for many more than the minimum required total of 12 credit hours of thesis research.

The Thesis

Thesis research represents an attempt to answer a research question or test a research hypothesis that has some significance to the discipline. The work is conducted under the guidance and mentoring of the student's thesis committee. The written thesis is the culmination of the student's research. It communicates the research problem, its significance, its context within the literature, the methods used to conduct the research, data and results, how the results fit into the larger perspective, and references cited.

Thesis Committee

Your thesis advisory committee is comprised of your thesis supervisor (also called your advisor, thesis director, or committee chair) and two other tenured or tenure-track faculty members from the department. Your thesis supervisor is chair of your thesis advisory committee and should be determined early in your program, ideally by the middle of your second semester. You may choose to include one additional (a fourth) committee member from outside the department, usually an OU faculty member from the most relevant cognate field. In that case, the optional fourth member of the committee will vote on committee decisions if they are a member of the graduate faculty in their home department. Alternatively, you may select as a fourth committee member an emeritus or a non-tenure track professor in our department to serve in an advisory (non-voting) capacity. In all cases, the optional fourth committee member must have at least a master's degree. Only tenured or tenure-track faculty from the Geography department can serve as a thesis director or as one of the other two main members of your thesis committee. Each student must

successfully defend the thesis proposal, and later the final thesis, in front of this committee. It is expected that the members of the thesis committee remain the same from proposal to thesis defense, but substitutions may be made under exceptional circumstances.

Thesis Proposal

Students should plan to defend a thesis proposal by the end of the second semester. This schedule gives students time to conduct their thesis research. If a defense by this date is not possible, students may use the break after their second semester to prepare for a proposal defense early in their third semester. Students must have their thesis proposal defended **no later than the end of the 5th week of their third semester**. Submit the signed Thesis Proposal Defense form to the administrative specialist when the committee approves this proposal.

You are expected to follow the instructions of your advisor as to the content and length of your thesis proposal, but most proposals are 15-20 pages long and include an introduction, the statement of a research question or research hypothesis, a discussion of the significance of the research, context of the problem within the literature, methods, time table, and references cited. Once a proposal meets the advisor's approval it is distributed to each committee member **at least one week** prior to the scheduled proposal defense meeting.

The Written Thesis

Like the proposal, the thesis is written with the advice and guidance of the advisor. The thesis defense occurs only after the advisor has approved the thesis and agrees that it may be distributed to the thesis committee. The thesis must be given to committee members **at least one week** prior to the thesis defense.

Virtually all students have some revisions to make to their thesis after the defense. Once the revisions are completed and the committee has given final approval to the thesis, you must submit an electronic copy of it to the Thesis and Dissertation (TAD) Services office of the Graduate College. Your advisor or the graduate chair then submits the signed thesis defense form to the College of Arts and Sciences. Formatting, submission, and other guidelines for the thesis are posted on the TAD Services part of the Graduate College webpage (www.ohio.edu/graduate/etd).

Proposal and Thesis Defenses

When your advisor agrees that your proposal or thesis is ready to be circulated to your committee and defended, you can schedule your defense for a time that is acceptable to your committee. Every attempt should be made to schedule defenses during the fall or spring semester. Faculty members may not be available for defenses during summer, other break periods, or holidays. The defending student is responsible for arranging a time and room for each defense. Scheduling a two-hour block of time is recommended, especially for the thesis defense. Consult with the department's administrative specialist in the main office to reserve a room and time for the defense. Once your thesis defense is scheduled, prepare a flyer that lists your name, thesis title, a photo or illustration relevant to your thesis topic, and the date, time, and location of the defense. Post these around the department to notify the rest of the OU Geography community about the thesis defense. Submit the Arrangement for the Oral Thesis Defense form to the Administrative Specialist when you have your day/time arranged.

Both the proposal defense and the thesis defense begin with an approximately 20-minute presentation in which the student summarizes the essential aspects of the proposed or completed study. The committee members and other interested faculty and graduate students attend the presentation. After questions from the general audience, the advisor excuses the general audience to begin the part of the defense reserved for the student and committee alone. Unanimous approval by the voting members of the committee is required to pass a proposal or thesis defense. With additional preparation as directed by the student's advisory committee, a proposal or thesis that was not successfully defended can be redefended for possible approval.

Be sure to take the required signature form, part of which you fill out, to both the proposal and the thesis defenses. The forms are available from the geography department's graduate student information webpage

(www.ohio.edu/cas/geography/grad/courses-resources/index.cfm). Your committee chair keeps the signed thesis oral defense completion form until the committee is satisfied with the final, revised version of the thesis.

Registration

Full-time students at Ohio University take between 12 and 18 graduate credit hours per semester. There is no cost differential whatsoever between 12 and 18 graduate credit hours. The department requires all students receiving a graduate assistantship (GA, TA, or RA) or a Graduate Recruitment Scholarship (GRS) to enroll in **18 graduate credit hours per semester**. This applies to students supported by the department or by other units at the university. A course load of more than 18 credit hours is considered an overload by the Graduate College. An overload requires special permission from the college and incurs additional tuition costs that are not covered by financial aid, for which the student is responsible.

Graduate student tuition and fees must be paid within 30 days of registration. Students on assistantships or scholarships should be aware that registering early for the next term could mean that payment will be due before receipt of their first stipend payment for that term. Be sure to plan accordingly.

Grades and Standing in the Program

You were accepted into the program because you have the interests, skills, and work ethic to complete your degree in a timely manner. We are confident that you will perform well in your classes and achieve high grades. However, you should be aware of the following guidelines for graduate-level academic expectations.

GPA Requirement

Ohio University operates on a plus/minus grading system, e.g., A (4.00), A- (3.67), B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), etc. Unconditional admission into the program requires an undergraduate grade point average (gpa) of 3.00 (B) or higher, or compensating evidence of the ability to perform at the graduate level. To remain in good standing in the program you must maintain this level of performance as a minimum. If your overall gpa drops below 3.00, you will be placed on academic probation immediately. At that time, you will have one semester (or the equivalent of 12 graduate credit hours) to raise your overall average to the 3.00 mark. Students on academic probation cannot receive any financial aid from Ohio University.

The lowest acceptable grade in a graduate course is a C (2.00). However, any student receiving more than one grade of C (at any time in his or her course of study) may be dropped from the program. In such a case, a formal meeting with the student and the graduate committee will be held to discuss the grades and the prospect of removal. Students must earn at least a B (3.00) in the required course (GEOG 5000) in order to receive credit for it, otherwise he or she must repeat the course and earn a grade of B (3.00) or better. A student who receives a grade lower than a C (2.00) in any course can be dropped from the program at the discretion of the graduate committee. If the student is allowed to remain in the program with a grade of less than C (2.00), the course and the hours in which the grade below C (2.00) were earned will not count toward the credit hour requirement for the degree.

Annual Review

At the end of spring semester, the graduate committee will conduct a review of your performance thus far in the program. The purpose of this review is to verify that you are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of your degree and that you are on track to fulfill all the requirements of the program on time. Working with your advisor, the graduate committee will:

- Examine your grade report, paying particular attention to courses completed and your gpa
- Identify course grades below B (3.00), as well as Incomplete (I) and Progress (PR) grades (indicating that course requirements have not been completed)
- Seek comments and recommendations from your advisor regarding your ability to complete the degree
- Request a timetable for completing I or PR grades, if any were noted

Students making adequate progress toward the degree are considered in good standing. Following the annual review by the graduate committee, any student found not to be in good standing will receive a letter to that effect from the graduate chair. Students receiving an assistantship or Graduate Recruitment Scholarship who are judged not to be in good standing will lose financial support. Students not in good standing may be terminated from the program on the advice of the graduate committee.

Graduation

OU students must **apply for graduation** online via their MyOHIO portal **early in the term** in which they expect to graduate (<https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/grd.cfm>). The deadline to apply for graduation occurs approximately one month into the semester. If you are not able to complete the requirements for graduation as planned, the application for graduation must be renewed online (for a small fee) for a subsequent term.

Financial Assistance and Fees

The Department of Geography offers financial assistance in the form of Graduate Recruitment Scholarships and graduate assistantships. A graduate assistantship is usually designated as a teaching assistantship or a research assistantship. Only students admitted unconditionally may receive financial aid, although not all unconditionally admitted students receive aid. All students on financial assistance are obligated to perform certain duties, discussed below. Students must balance their schedules to meet assistantship, classroom, and personal obligations. Details regarding fees and related financial information can be found on the Bursar's webpage (<https://www.ohio.edu/bursar/graduate-tuition>).

Graduate Recruitment Scholarships

A Graduate Recruitment Scholarship (GRS) covers most of your tuition costs, whether resident or nonresident, for each semester awarded. Part of this funding is received as a stipend and is spread throughout the semester as compensation for assistantship work performed. The student is responsible for applying this stipend to the remaining tuition. Students are also responsible for all other fees (the general fee, technology fee, network fee, and health insurance). Recipients of the scholarship must take at least 12 graduate credit hours and work 5 hours per week for the department during each GRS-funded semester. Examples of assistantship duties for GRS students include grading for large classes or teaching one lab section. Only students who are recruited into the Department of Geography are eligible for this award. Students who have received any other financial assistance from the department are not eligible.

Assistantships

Departmental assistantships are designated as teaching assistantships (TA), graduate assistantships (GA), or research assistantships (RA). These assistantships provide a tuition scholarship, whether resident or nonresident, and a stipend. The student is responsible for all other fees (the general fee, technology fee, network fee, and health insurance). The student is obligated to work no more than 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters.

A student receiving a teaching/graduate assistantship is responsible for such duties as teaching lab or discussion sections, leading field trips, grading exams and assignments, and other forms of assisting classroom instruction. Most TAs/GAs are assigned to work with a specific professor in a specific class for the semester. Professors meet with and provide instructions, materials, and other information to their TAs/GAs. Specific course assignments for TAs/GAs are not made until after the welcome meeting for incoming students in the fall; spring semester TA/GA assignments are usually made a couple of weeks before the start of the new term.

A research assistant is obligated to work a maximum of 20 hours per week according to the terms of her or his appointment. RAs generally work with an individual faculty member on a specific grant-funded research project, but RAs occasionally receive other assignments, including outside of the Department of Geography, such as with the Voinovich Center for Leadership and Public Affairs. Funding amounts for grant-supported RAs can vary with the position because they are dependent on the terms and amounts of the faculty grants.

Work Performance and Renewal of Financial Aid

Financial aid is not automatically renewed for the second year but will be determined when the annual performance review is completed. Unless there are performance problems, the normal expectation is to continue aid for the second year. Failure to complete assigned assistantship work will result in a reduction or stop in pay. If a student leaves the university without finishing required work assignments, their pay will be adjusted according to the amount of work completed.

Code of Conduct

All graduate students need to pay close attention to university regulations and procedures, especially regarding the student code of conduct, rights to privacy, and sexual harassment. Information on the student code of conduct is found online at <http://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/>. Teaching assistants in particular need to maintain a sense of professionalism and adhere to the university's privacy policies regarding students' personal information. Among other things, this includes maintaining the confidentiality of any student's health issues, disability status, and grades, whether for a course, lab, or assignment. Personal relationships with faculty, or with students who you supervise, should not occur. According to the university's statement on sexual misconduct, "consensual romantic or sexual relationships in which one party retains a direct supervisory or evaluative role over the other party are unethical, create a risk for real or perceived coercion, and are expressly a violation of this policy." Such interactions can compromise your ability to teach or learn effectively, participate fully in our program, and realize your professional goals. You should read the university's policy on sexual misconduct in full at <http://www.ohio.edu/policy/03-004.html>.

If you feel you are being subjected to harassment of any type, or that you are being asked to perform tasks beyond what is reasonable to expect given your graduate appointment, contact the graduate chair, department chair, your advisor, or university authorities, such as the Office of Institutional Equity, immediately.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on exams, falsifying information) are unacceptable forms of behavior for graduate students as well as undergraduate students. When a faculty member judges that plagiarism or academic dishonesty has taken place, action will be taken against the student or students committing the offense. Additional action by the graduate committee is possible. Academic misconduct may result in failing an assignment or course, referral to the OU Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility, and the possibility of being dropped from the program.

When a student is accused and judged guilty of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, they may follow the established appeal process. For more information, contact the department chair and consult the information available online at the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility (<http://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/>).

Departmental Operational Policies and Procedures

News, Information, and Email

Announcements and other important information on such matters as departmental events, colloquia, visiting faculty, visiting prospective graduate students, or special opportunities are sent out over the **Geography graduate student listserv** via OU email. Much information about the department and graduate program, including the proposal and thesis defense forms, appears on the department's webpage. It is your responsibility to review these sources periodically for information and general communications in order to remain informed. Dr. Sinha manages the **Geog Jobs listserv**, which sends out announcements relating to geography internships and job opportunities, both undergraduate and graduate. Contact Dr. Sinha (sinhag@ohio.edu) if you would like to join the Geog Jobs listserv.

You are expected to **use the email account supplied by the university** as your primary email account for all official departmental, college, and university communication. Facebook, Twitter, and other means of

electronic communication is not appropriate for departmental or university business. This is particularly important for graduate students with teaching responsibilities. If you routinely use a different email account, be sure to have your OU email forwarded there or you will miss important information, opportunities, and deadline announcements.

Graduate Office Space and Desktop Computers

Teaching assistants (TAs) have priority for the carrels in the graduate student office (Clippinger 100). The chair of the graduate committee determines desk (carrel) assignment priority and makes all final desk assignments. Typically, most, if not all, graduate students are able to have a desk in the department. It is usually possible for the department to supply a relatively recent desktop computer for your desk, if you request one.

Keys and Mailboxes

Keys to the building, to the graduate student offices, and to your assigned desk in a graduate student office are available from the departmental administrative specialist to allow you access to the department during evenings and weekends. No deposit is required, but the keys must be returned at the time of graduation for the department to finalize the degree process. These keys are your responsibility and are not to be loaned out to anyone. If you lose these keys, you may be charged a replacement fee.

All graduate students have a physical mailbox in the graduate office (Clippinger 100). These boxes are for professional, university, college, and departmental mail, and not for personal business or private communications.

Photocopying and Printing

Teaching assistants may use the departmental photocopy machine in Clippinger 122A to copy materials directly related to their teaching responsibilities. Please be conservative in your use of paper, such as by making double-sided copies, as much as possible. See our administrative specialist for access. **You are not permitted to use this machine for a class you are taking or for personal copies.**

Graduate students may use the printer in the small interior hallway that leads to Clippinger 103A&B (across from Clip 100) for making some personal copies and for printing. Computers in the graduate student offices have networked access to that copier/printer. Each graduate student may copy/print up to 500 black/white pages each semester on that printer free of charge. Any changes in the maximum number of pages will be announced via the graduate student listserv.

Departmental Office

Personnel in the departmental office are available to assist graduate students, but the requests should be for official purposes and related to departmental duties.

Service and Participation Opportunities

Taking on a service position, representing graduate student interests, and participating in departmental student organizations are great ways to get to know the department, faculty, and other students better and to contribute to the departmental community. The department currently has three service positions for graduate students and three student organizations.

Graduate Student Departmental Representative

The graduate representative acts as a liaison between the geography graduate students and the departmental administration. The graduate representative can bring student concerns and ideas to the department chair, the graduate chair, or the geography faculty, as appropriate, and communicate information, opportunities, and concerns from the department chair, graduate chair, or geography faculty to geography graduate students.

Nominations, including self-nominations, are accepted by the graduate chair, who supervises the election near the end of spring semester for the subsequent year, thus the position is typically held by a second-year student. If only one person expresses interest in the position, they are considered elected by consensus. The representative assists with the departmental orientation day for fall semester and may communicate over summer with incoming students. The representative can help coordinate information on graduate student travel plans to conferences (e.g., the AAG) and convey travel and research funding opportunities, policies, and procedures to students. Other tasks might include helping to organize graduate student interaction with visiting or prospective faculty and prospective graduate students, preparation for colloquia, and serving as geography's alternate representative to the Graduate Student Senate.

Graduate Student Senate Representative

Early in fall semester, geography graduate students elect their representative to the Graduate Student Senate (GSS). The election process is overseen by the graduate chair who solicits nominations for the position, including self-nominations. If only one graduate student expresses interest in the position they are considered elected by consensus. The GSS representative participates in GSS meetings, communicates information, opportunities, and concerns of the GSS to the geography graduate students, and those of the geography graduate students to GSS.

Graduate Student Member of the Colloquium Committee

The colloquium committee arranges for guest speakers to come to the department and present a geographically relevant aspect of their research. The committee helps host the speakers, advertises the colloquia to other interested departments, and considers possible speakers for the future. A volunteer for this position is sought early in the fall semester, with preference to a first-year student.

Graduate Student Social Media Coordinator

This individual makes suggestions to the department's media and communications committee for the graduate content of the department's webpage, helps keep the department's Facebook page and social media presence up-to-date, and helps generate ideas, photos, and text regarding current graduate students for our annual departmental newsletter, the *Geogram*, which typically appears in winter. Volunteers for this position are sought early in fall semester, although suggestions by any of our students are always appreciated.

Geography-Sponsored Student Associations

The department currently has three active student associations, the Geography Club, the OU Chapter of the American Meteorology Society (OUCAMS), and the OU Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), which is an international geography honor society. Participation in the Geography Club is open to anyone at OU who is interested in geography. Membership in OUCAMS is open to undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in meteorology or climatology. As an honor society, GTU has specific academic requirements for membership, with new members inducted each spring. The Geography Club and GTU meet together because they share the same service and activity goals. The Geography Club/GTU and OUCAMS each have regularly scheduled weekly meetings during the fall and spring semesters, and occasionally have joint meetings or activities. Graduate students are welcome and encouraged to participate in these associations.

Travel Funds and Research Awards

The department encourages graduate students to participate in professional conferences, showcase their research at the annual Ohio University Student Research Expo (held each spring), and seek funding for their research expenses. In addition to departmental sources of research funding discussed below, the university offers Student Enhancement Awards, Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Grants for Original Work, and GSS Travel Grants. Links to these can be found on the department's webpage. Most professional organizations and associations, and many other sources external to the university, offer grants or awards to help graduate

students with research or travel costs. Relevant funding sources vary depending on the research topic. You should consult your advisor for suggestions.

Departmental Funding for Conference Travel

The department encourages graduate students to attend and participate in conferences relevant to their geographical interests. Conferences provide invaluable opportunities to meet people with similar interests and to learn about the latest research results and directions. Most faculty members and several students typically attend the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) or the American Meteorological Society (AMS), and some attend regional or specialty conferences as well.

To encourage and support you in this important professional activity, you may request from the department during an academic year up to \$250 toward travel costs to a single conference at which you do not present a paper or poster, and up to \$500 if you are presenting a poster or paper based on your research. The annual maximum amount of conference travel funds that a student can receive from the department is currently \$500. Students interested in making a research presentation at a conference should first discuss the possibility and their presentation ideas with their advisor and do so as early as possible before an abstract submission deadline. Departmental travel funds are requested by your advisor by submitting a travel authorization form to the department, and university policies regarding travel funds must be followed.

Isaac Sindiga Memorial Fund for Geography

The Sindiga Award is given annually (if there are qualified applicants) to one or more graduate students in support of direct costs of conducting thesis research. The research must include some element of travel or fieldwork as well as research expenses that would otherwise be out-of-pocket. To be considered for the award, students must (1) have completed two semesters of full-time graduate coursework toward their OU geography master's degree, (2) have approval of the project by their thesis committee, and (3) submit their application to the graduate chair by the designated due date, typically in early June. Application materials consist of a brief (maximum three-page, double-spaced) synopsis of the project indicating the research purpose (what & where), the rationale (why), and the plan for accomplishing the research (how & when). An additional page, if needed, can be used to provide the project budget, detailing estimated expenses for conducting the research and listing any other funding received or applied for to help cover those out-of-pocket expenses. Finally, the applicant's thesis advisor must submit a letter of recommendation to the graduate chair by the application due date. The graduate committee makes award decisions based on the merits of the proposed research, quality of the proposal, endorsement of the advisor, and the student's academic performance in the program to date. Students cannot receive a Sindiga award more than once.

Geofest and Achievement Awards

Near the end of each spring semester, the department hosts a banquet, called Geofest, to congratulate all our graduating students and to celebrate and recognize student achievements for the academic year. Graduate student awards for outstanding teaching assistance and for outstanding scholarship are presented.

The College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Geography each give an award to recognize an outstanding teaching assistant. The two awards are given to different students and are of equal significance. All TAs are eligible for the awards, but second-year graduate students tend to receive them because they have a longer track record of TA experience. There is no application process for these awards. The graduate committee selects the recipients based on such criteria as student evaluations and faculty recommendations.

The department recognizes at Geofest an outstanding graduate scholar from the group of second-year (graduating) graduate students. Criteria used by the graduate committee in selecting the recipient include such factors as coursework and gpa, quality and status of completion of the thesis, and solicited comments from supervisors, committee members, and other faculty members.

Upon Completion of your Program

After your final revised thesis has been submitted to the Graduate College, you must complete and submit to the department chair the Exit Survey, which is located at <https://www.ohio.edu/cas/geography/grad/courses-resources/index.cfm>. You must also return all keys to the department's administrative specialist, and do so **before you leave town**. Finally, we love to hear from our alumni, and encourage you to keep in touch with the department.