Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 3

Advising ................................................................................................................................................... 3

Summary of Coursework Requirements .................................................................................................... 3
  Course Requirements (MA, MS) Thesis Track (Table 1) ........................................................................... 4
  Course Requirements (MA, MS) Non-Thesis Track (Table 2) ............................................................... 5
  Courses Required of All Graduate Students. ......................................................................................... 6

Thesis Track .............................................................................................................................................. 6
  Course and Credit Hour Requirements ............................................................................................... 6
  Thesis Committee ............................................................................................................................... 6
  Thesis Proposal .................................................................................................................................... 7
  The Thesis ............................................................................................................................................... 7
  Proposal and Thesis Defenses ............................................................................................................ 7

Non-Thesis Track ..................................................................................................................................... 8
  Course and Credit Hour Requirements ............................................................................................... 8
  Non-Thesis Committee ...................................................................................................................... 8
  Comprehensive Written and Oral Exams ............................................................................................ 8

Registration ............................................................................................................................................. 9

Grades and Standing in the Program ........................................................................................................ 9
  GPA Requirements ............................................................................................................................. 9
  Annual Review ..................................................................................................................................... 9
  Graduation ............................................................................................................................................ 10

Financial Assistance and Fees .................................................................................................................. 10
  Graduate Recruitment Scholarships .................................................................................................. 10
  Graduate Assistantships .................................................................................................................... 10
  Work Performance and Renewal of Financial Aid ............................................................................. 11

Code of Conduct ................................................................................................................................... 11

Departmental Operational Policies and Procedures .................................................................................. 11
  News, Information, and Email... ........................................................................................................ 11
  Graduate Office Space and Desktop Computers ................................................................................ 12
  Keys and Mailboxes .......................................................................................................................... 11
  Photocopying and Printing .............................................................................................................. 12
  Departmental Office ........................................................................................................................ 12

Service and Participation Opportunities ................................................................................................ 12
  Graduate Student Departmental Representative .............................................................................. 12
  Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Representative .............................................................................. 13
  Graduate Student Member of the Colloquium Committee ............................................................... 13
  Social Media Coordinator ............................................................................................................... 13
  Geography-Sponsored Student Associations .................................................................................. 13

Travel Funds and Research Awards .......................................................................................................... 13
  Departmental Funding for Conference Travel .................................................................................. 14
  Isaac Sindiga Memorial Fund for Geography ................................................................................... 14

Geofest and Achievement Awards .......................................................................................................... 14
Introduction

Welcome to the master’s degree program in the Department of Geography at Ohio University! The geography graduate committee has prepared this handbook as a convenient source document to assist you in completing your graduate program and to communicate major policies and procedures affecting geography graduate students. Familiarize yourself with this document’s contents, and refer back to it as questions arise. In addition, much information, including the most recent edition of this handbook, is available on the department’s webpage. If you need assistance beyond what is discussed in the handbook, 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, familiarize yourself with 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 a number of possible specialties at the graduate level:

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

Students have the option of choosing the thesis or non-thesis track in the program. Both tracks typically require two years (four semesters) to complete. Graduate students receive credit only for classes at the 5000 level or higher; courses at the 4000 level or lower are not graduate courses.

Advising

Individual welcome interviews for new graduate students, and a group orientation for all geography graduate students and faculty, are held just prior to fall semester, usually on the Friday before the first week of classes. 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 your temporary advisor until you arrange for a faculty member to supervise your thesis or non-thesis work; your thesis/non-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. Academic advisors are available to answer your questions and offer academic advice.

Determining who will become your permanent thesis or non-thesis supervisor results from your conversations with individual geography professors whose interests are similar to yours. Once you have identified a faculty member you would like as your supervisor, you must ask if she or he 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 you are a non-thesis track student, your supervisor should have expertise in one of your three selected areas of concentration. If, after identifying a permanent advisor, your primary research interests change substantially to one better represented by a different professor, it may be possible to change advisors.

Summary of Coursework Requirements

The department offers a Master’s of Arts (MA) and a Master’s of Science (MS) degree in geography. Tables 1 and 2 list the course requirements for the thesis track and the non-thesis track, respectively.
**TABLE 1. Course Requirements (MA, MS): Thesis Track**

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

- **Thesis hours (12 credit hours):**
  
  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 Sciences
  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
TABLE 2. Course Requirements (MA, MS): Non-Thesis Track

For the non-thesis option, students select three subject areas of concentration. At least one concentration is a method or technique (e.g., GIS, remote sensing), and at least one concentration is systematic (e.g., population, climatology, urban geography) or area studies (e.g., Africa).

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

- 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 course can be from outside Geography]
  For the MS degree select at least one of the two seminars from:
  GEOG 6010 Seminar in Atmospheric Sciences
  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. 24 hours): [With permission, two courses 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 three (any three) of these GEOG courses:
  5010 Meteorology
  5020 Climatology
  5060 Synoptic Meteorology
  5070 Mesoscale Meteorology
  5080 Dynamic Meteorology I
  5090 Dynamic Meteorology II
  5050 Physical Meteorology
  5110 Advanced Physical Geog.
  5130 Arid Lands Physical Geog.
  5150 Landforms & Landscapes
  5160 Biogeography
  5170 Landscape Ecology
  5530 Env. Planning/Assessment
  5580 Environmental Hazards
  5600 Cartography I
  5610 Cartography II
  5650 Air Photo Interpretation
  5660 Principles of Remote Sensing
  5670 Advanced Remote Sensing
  5710 Quantitative Methods
  5712 Field Methods in Geography
  5730 Principles of GIS
  5740 GIS Design & Application Development
  5750 GIS & Landscape Analysis
  5760 Geographic Information Analysis
Courses Required of All Graduate Students
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 seminars (above the 5000 level) 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. Finally, all graduate students should enroll in the 1 credit hour Colloquium in Geography (GEOG 5911) each semester.

Thesis Track

Course and Credit Hour Requirements
Students in the thesis track (Table 1) must complete a minimum of 40 hours of graduate credit, consisting of 12 hours of thesis credit and 28 credit hours of courses (this includes required courses). 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.

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.

You may register for thesis hours (GEOG 6950) only after completing GEOG 5000 and when you are actually working on your thesis proposal or research. Usually this is not until the spring semester of your first year in the program. You can take more than 12 credit hours of thesis to complete your program, but you will be credited for a total of only 12 hours when the thesis has been completed and approved by the graduate college.

Thesis Committee
Your thesis advisory committee is composed 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 as long as he or she is a member of the graduate faculty in his or her home department. Alternatively, you may select as a fourth committee member an emeritus or a nontenure-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. The 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
You should plan to defend your thesis proposal by the end of your second semester. This schedule gives you time to conduct your thesis research. If a defense by this time is not possible, you may use the break after your first year to prepare for a proposal defense early in your third semester. Thesis-track students must have a proposal defended no later than the end of the 5th week of their third semester. Students who have not defended their proposal by this time will be placed in the non-thesis track so that they can still earn their degree in a timely manner.

Students are expected to follow the instructions of his or her advisor on the content and length of the thesis proposal, but most proposals are 15-20 pages long and include an introduction, the statement of a research question or research hypothesis, significance, 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 Thesis
Thesis research represents an attempt to answer a research question or test a research hypothesis that has some significance to the discipline. The written thesis is the culmination of the student’s research. 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 the committee members at least one week prior to the scheduled 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 submits the signed thesis defense form to the College of Arts and Sciences at this time. 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/index.cfm).

Proposal and Thesis Defenses
When your advisor agrees that your proposal or thesis is ready to be circulated to your committee and defended, you must schedule your defense. The defending student is responsible for arranging a place and time for both the proposal defense and the thesis defense. Scheduling a 2-hour block of time is recommended, especially for the thesis defense. Consult with the department’s administrative associate in the main office to reserve a room and time. After the meeting has been scheduled, departmental staff will notify the rest of the geography community about the defense. Every attempt should be made to schedule your defenses during the fall or spring semester. Faculty members may not be available for defenses during summer, other break periods, or holidays.

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 (http://www.ohio.edu/geography/current-graduate.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.

7
Non-Thesis Track

Course and Credit Hour Requirements
The non-thesis track requires more coursework than the thesis track, and comprehensive written and oral exams are taken in lieu of completing a thesis. The non-thesis track requires the completion of **40 hours** of graduate-level coursework, as listed in Table 2. A minimum of 28 credit hours must be in courses from the Department of Geography (this includes required courses); the remaining 12 credit hours may be from a cognate discipline. GEOG 5030, 5040, 5910, 5911, 6930, and 6950 are excluded from the count, as are credits from classes in the OU Program in Intensive English (OPIE), the English Language Improvement Program (ELIP), other language courses, and any audited course. Students in the non-thesis track develop a program of study that covers three subject areas. These three areas of concentration must include at least one method/technique (e.g., GIS) and at least one systematic or regional (e.g., Africa) subject area. Systematic areas are the thematic subfields within human, physical, and environmental geography (e.g., urban geography, geomorphology).

Non-Thesis Committee
The non-thesis advisory committee is composed of three tenured or tenure-track faculty members from our department who together represent your selected areas of concentration. This committee must approve your program of study and will administer your written and oral comprehensive exams. You must take at least one course from each of your committee members as part of your non-thesis studies. Your committee should meet by the end of your first year to discuss your areas of concentration and program of study and to advise you on preparing for your comprehensive exams. Meeting at this point will help you progress through the program in a timely manner. If a student declares the non-thesis option during their third semester of classes (normally fall of the second year), then the non-thesis committee will meet during that semester to establish the three areas of specialization and to discuss exam preparation. Once your non-thesis committee has been formed and your exam topics selected, complete and submit to the graduate chair or administrative associate the department’s Non-Thesis Committee/Exam form. Your committee must approve the areas of specialization at least one semester before the exams are administered. In some instances a committee member may agree to supervise a non-thesis student in directed readings (GEOG 6930) to help the student prepare for the examination, but directed readings are designed to supplement courses, not replace them.

Comprehensive Written and Oral Exams
Near the end of their coursework (typically in the fourth semester), a student pursuing the non-thesis option takes three separate 3-hour written comprehensive exams, one in each of their areas of concentration. The written exams are to be completed no later than the **12th week** of their final semester and within the span of one week, with one exam per day, such as a Monday/Wednesday/Friday schedule. The exams are normally taken in the department’s conference room, which must be reserved for that purpose through the department office. The exact format of an exam is decided by each committee member (examiner) in consultation with the advisor. Examiners are expected to evaluate the student’s performance within one week of the written exam date with a grade of pass, conditional pass, or fail. To advance to the oral examination, the student must pass at the conditional level or higher all three written exams. A failed written exam may be retaken once, with the retake occurring in the subsequent term after time for further study.

The oral comprehensive examination is conducted after the written comprehensive exams in a group meeting of the student and their advisory committee. In the oral exam, committee members may ask for clarification and elaboration of responses to the written exams or may ask entirely different questions to establish that the student is suitably knowledgeable of and conversant on the body of knowledge in the area of concentration. The oral exam is pass/fail, with a pass requiring a unanimous vote of the committee. A failed oral exam may be retaken once, with the retake occurring in the subsequent term after time for further study.
Registration

Full-time students take between 12 and 18 graduate credit hours per semester. The Graduate College requires all students receiving a graduate assistantship (GA, TA, or RA) to carry a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours per semester, and students receiving a Graduate Recruitment Scholarship (GRS) must take at least 15 hours per semester. The Department of Geography requires all students receiving any financial aid to carry at least 12 graduate credit hours each semester. This applies to students supported by the department or by other units in 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. Tuition waivers do not cover the costs of more than 18 credit hours per semester.

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 Requirements

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 her/his 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 issue 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 pace 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
Following this review, your status in the program is communicated to you in an annual letter of review from the graduate chair. Students in good standing are making adequate progress toward the degree, whereas students in poor standing are not. Students receiving a graduate assistantship or Graduate Recruitment Scholarship who are judged to be in poor standing will lose financial support. Students judged in poor 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 (see www ohio edu registrar gradapp 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 ($5 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 (http://www ohio edu finance bursar/) as well as the webpage of the Graduate College (http://www ohio edu graduate/).

Graduate Recruitment Scholarships
A Graduate Recruitment Scholarship (GRS) covers tuition costs, whether resident or nonresident, for each semester awarded. Part of the funding is received as direct tuition support, and part is spread throughout the semester as compensation for assistantship work performed. The student is responsible for all other fees (the general fee, technology fee, and health insurance). Recipients of the scholarship must take at least 15 graduate credit hours and work 6 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.

Graduate Assistantships
Graduate assistantships (GA) are designated as either teaching assistantships (TA) or research assistantships (RA). Both types provide a tuition scholarship, whether resident or nonresident, and a stipend. The student is responsible for all other fees (the general fee, technology 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 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 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. Specific course assignments for TAs are not made until after the welcome meeting for incoming students in the fall; spring semester TA 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. Research assistants 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 GA or RA work will result in a reduction or stop in pay. If students leave 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/](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 that 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](http://www.ohio.edu/policy/03-004.html).

If at any time you feel that 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, you should 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. 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, he or she 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/](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. Much information about the department and graduate program, including the proposal and thesis defense forms, appears on the department’s webpage or is available from the departmental Blackboard community. 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 of geography internships and job opportunities, both undergraduate and graduate. Contact Dr. Sinha ([sinhag@ohio.edu](mailto:sinhag@ohio.edu)) if you would like to join the Geog Jobs listserv.
You are expected to use the email account and address 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 are 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 first priority for the carrels in the larger graduate student office (Clippinger 100). The chair of the graduate committee decides 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 associate 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.

All graduate students have a physical mailbox in the main 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 associate for access. You are not permitted to use the copy 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 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, she or he is 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, 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, he or she is considered elected by consensus. The GSS representative participates in GSS meetings, communications 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.

**Social Media Coordinator**

This individual (or possibly two) makes suggestions 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.

**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 you to attend and participate in conferences relevant to your 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 annual meeting of the American Meteorological Society (AMS), and many 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, and university policies regarding travel funds must be followed.

**Isaac Sindiga Memorial Fund for Geography**

The Sindiga Award is given annually (if 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 support from the Sindiga Fund more than once.

**Geofest and Achievement Awards**

Near the end of each spring semester, the department hosts a banquet, known as Geofest, to congratulate all of 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 typically presented at Geofest.

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 either the thesis or comprehensive exams, and solicited comments from supervisors, committee members, and other faculty members.