

# **Graduate Program Policy Manual For In-Residence Students**

Department of Geography  
Texas A&M University  
2019

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) IN GEOGRAPHY DEGREE**

Our Graduate Program offers a Ph.D. degree through either a 64-hour or a 96-hour option. Similar to the M.S. degree, Ph.D. students are admitted to the program two times per year, in the fall and the spring semesters. Our 64-hour Ph.D. degree program is designed for students who hold an M.S. degree when they enter the doctoral program. Our 96-hour Ph.D. degree program is intended to facilitate the work of students who are seeking a Ph.D. directly after their Bachelor's degree.

### **Student's Advisory Committee (96 and 64 hour options)**

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework in the student's first semester, the student will consult with the Graduate Director concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The student's advisory committee for the Ph.D. degree will consist of **no fewer than four members of the graduate faculty**, representative of the student's fields of study and research. The chair or the co-chair of the advisory committee must be a graduate faculty members in the Geography Department and **at least one of the members must have their primary appointment to a department other than the Geography Department.**

The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members located off campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair) with a member as the chair. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's research and thesis, has the responsibility for calling required meetings of the committee and for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student's academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head may request in writing to the Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student's advisory committee without a co-chair for up to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

If the chair of the student's advisory committee is unavailable for an extended time in any academic period during which the student is involved in activities relating to an internship or thesis, and is registered for courses such as 684 and 691, the student may request, in writing, that the department head appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period.

**The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, the thesis and the final examination. In addition, the committee as a group and as individual members are responsible for advising the student on academic matters,** and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Geography Department Graduate Committee and to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) if warranted.

The committee members' approval on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign *en masse*.

## **Degree Plan Requirements (96- and 64-hour Options)**

The student's advisory committee will evaluate the student's previous education and degree objectives. The student, in consultation with the committee, will develop a proposed degree plan and outline a research problem which, when completed, as indicated by the dissertation, will constitute the basic requirements for the degree. **Ph.D. students must file degree plans with the Graduate Committee by the end of the summer and before the student's third semester** (i.e., by August 1 for a student starting the Ph.D. program in the fall semester). Students must submit their degree plans to the Graduate Committee as one file in PDF form, containing:

1. a *degree plan form* that lists the courses to be taken as well as the information on the advisory committee,
2. a *degree plan statement* covering the contents of the degree plan, including a research statement, the justification of the advisory committee, and the justification of the courses listed in the degree plan.

Degree plan **MUST** be approved according to the following guidelines:

1. The student, in consultation with the student's advisory committee, will develop the proposed degree plan (including the degree plan form and degree plan statement).
2. The proposed degree plan will be submitted by the chair of the student's advisory committee to the Graduate Director for approval by the Graduate Committee.
3. Approved degree plan will be submitted to the departmental voting faculty on a consent agenda for approval.
4. **Departmental review and approval will be completed no later than the beginning of the student's third semester** (i.e. September faculty meeting for a student starting the Ph.D. program in the fall semester).
5. **Within two weeks following the departmental approval, the degree plan will be uploaded and filed with the OGAPS in the correct format as follows:**
  - a. A student will submit the degree plan using the online Document Processing Submission System (<http://ogsdps.tamu.edu>).
  - b. A student submitting a proposed degree plan should designate on the official degree plan the appropriate program option.
6. Degree plan must be approved by the Department Head and the student's committee on OGAPS.

### ***Other Deadlines***

Completed degree plans MUST be submitted to OGAPS according to the following guidelines:

1. No later than 90 days prior to the preliminary exam.
2. According to deadlines published in the OGAPS calendar and dates and deadlines documents each semester for that semester (<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/calendars/>).

### ***Changes to the Degree Plan***

Students who desire to modify degree plans after the degree plan has been approved should submit a request for the revision of the degree plan to the Graduate Director for approval prior to initiating those changes in OGAPS; in addition, the Department Head may act in emergencies.

Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisory committee to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student's Request for Final Examination or Request for Final Examination Exemption is approved by the OGAPS.

### **Credit Requirement (96-hour Option)**

A **minimum of 96 semester credit hours** of approved courses and research is required for the Ph.D. of a student who enters the program directly after their Bachelor's degree. Ordinarily the student will devote the major portion of his or her time to work in one or two closely related fields. Other work will be in supporting fields of interest. As a part of the degree plan, course work MUST be developed according to the following guidelines:

1. A minimum of 96 semester credit hours of approved courses and research is required.
2. Maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 for all graduate level work completed at Texas A&M University.
3. Department-wide **required** coursework is limited to:
  - a. GEOG 610: *Geographical Methods and Theory* (3 credits).
  - b. GEOG 611: *Geographical Research Design* (3 credits).
  - c. Two semesters of GEOG 681: *Geography Seminar* (0 credit).
4. Completion of at least 36 hours of course work that DOES NOT include GEOG 691 courses. Additional course work is at the discretion of the student committee and advisor.
5. Maximum of 60 hours of GEOG 691 and a maximum of 12 hours of GEOG 685.
6. All students in the doctoral program must take at least 9 units every semester (primarily in the form of appropriate graduate seminars) before taking the preliminary examination and advancing to candidacy.
7. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate (300, 400) courses are permitted.
8. The total credit hours that come from online courses taken must be less than 50% of the total course work hours (i.e., 36 hours).

## Credit Requirement (64-hour Option)

A **minimum of 64 semester credit hours** of approved courses and research is required for the Ph.D. of a student who enters the program having completed a master's degree. Ordinarily the student will devote the major portion of his or her time to work in one or two closely related fields. Other work will be in supporting fields of interest. As a part of the degree plan, course work **MUST** be developed according to the following guidelines:

1. A minimum of 64 semester credit hours of approved courses and research is required.
2. Maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 for all graduate level work completed at Texas A&M University.
3. Department-wide **required** coursework is limited to:
  - a. GEOG 610: *Geographical Methods and Theory* (3 credits).
  - b. GEOG 611: *Geographical Research Design* (3 credits).
  - c. Two semesters of GEOG 681: *Geography Seminar* (0 credit).
  - d. Students who completed their M.S. in Texas A&M Department of Geography are not required to repeat GEOG 610 and GEOG 611.
4. Completion of at least 30 hours of course work **DOES NOT** include GEOG 691 courses. Additional course work is at the discretion of the student committee and advisor.
5. Maximum of 34 hours of GEOG 691 and a maximum of 12 hours of GEOG 685.
6. All students in the doctoral program must take at least 9 units every semester (primarily in the form of appropriate graduate seminars) before taking the preliminary exam and advancing to candidacy.
7. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate (300, 400) courses are permitted.
8. The total credit hours that come from online courses taken must be less than 50% of the total course work hours (i.e., 30 hours).

Applicable OGAP rules for a student who has completed a DDS/DMD, DVM or a MD at a U.S. institution is also required to complete a minimum of 64 hours. A student who has completed a baccalaureate degree but not a master's degree will be required to complete a 96-hour degree plan. Completion of a DDS/DMD, DVM or MD degree at a foreign institution requires completion of a minimum of 96 hours for the Doctor of Philosophy. A field of study may be primarily in one department or in a combination of departments.

Approval to enroll in any professional course (900-level) should be obtained from the head of the department (or Chair of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable) in which the course will be offered before including such a course on a degree plan.

No credit may be obtained by correspondence study, by extension or for any course of fewer than three week duration.

## Transfer of Credit (96- and 64-hour Options)

Courses for which transfer credits are sought must have been completed with a grade of B or greater and must be approved by the student's advisory committee and the OGAPS. These courses must not have been used previously for another degree. Except for officially approved cooperative

doctoral programs, credit for thesis or dissertation research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for “internship” coursework in any form is not transferable. Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater will be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Credit for coursework taken by extension is not transferable. Coursework **in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit.** Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours, or equated to semester credit hours.

Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the OGAPS.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPR. An official transcript from the university at which transfer courses are taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

### **Qualifying Paper (96-hour Option)**

By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (i.e., August) student must hand in a *Qualifying Paper* that would be suitable—in length and in quality—for submission to an academic or scientific journal. The *Qualifying Paper* may be an investigation of an intellectual problem in the form of an original synthesis of secondary literature; it may advance a new idea, or question an existing theory or notion, by assembling information that already exists in the literature; or it may use original information/research gathered from archives, in the field, and/or in the laboratory. The student should have a proposal for the paper by the end of the first year, and must be in constant and close consultation with their main advisor. The advisor in consultation with advisory committee will determine the appropriate format and length of the paper. The paper must be handed in, and approved by the main advisor and advisory committee, no later than a month before the Preliminary Exam. The main advisor shall inform the Graduate Director upon approval of the Qualifying Paper.

### **Preliminary Examination (96- and 64-hour Options)**

A Preliminary exam is required of all Ph.D. students in the Geography Department. The objective of Preliminary Examinations is to ensure that Ph.D. students have a comprehensive grasp of the development, theories, methods, and current questions in their subfield in geography. However, the Geography Department believes that the proper conduct of this exam is particularly important in our field, because many Ph.D. students have no background in geography and so, very possibly, no knowledge of the discipline beyond the narrow confines of their own research. As a consequence the Preliminary Examination should not be narrowly tailored to the student’s dissertation research. Nor should the Examination reflect only the personal research programs of faculty members. The Examination is not to be conducted as a defense of the dissertation proposal.

The preliminary examination for a doctoral student shall be given no earlier than a date at which the student is within 6 credit hours of completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan (i.e., all coursework on the degree plan except 681, 684, 690, 691). The student is strongly encouraged to complete the Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the semester following the

completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan. **In the Geography Department this is typically near the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester or beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester in residence.**

The OGAPS must receive the results of the preliminary examination at least 14 weeks prior to the final examination date.

The examination shall be oral and written unless otherwise recommended by the student's advisory committee and approved by the OGAPS. The written part of the examination will cover all fields of study included in the student's degree plan. Each member of the advisory committee is responsible for administering a written examination in his or her particular field, **unless he or she chooses to waive participation in this part of the examination.** Two or more members of the advisory committee may give a joint written examination. Each written examination must be completed and reported as satisfactory to the chair of the advisory committee before the oral portion of the examination may be held. In case any written examination is reported unsatisfactory, the entire advisory committee must agree (1) to proceed with the oral portion of the preliminary examination, or (2) to adopt another course of action regarding the unsatisfactory written examination.

Geography faculty on the Advisory Committee will submit written questions that test the student's general grasp of the development, theories, methods, and current questions in their appropriate subfields. External members of the Advisory Committee are free to ask questions they deem appropriate. For the written exam, students will formulate outlines and reading lists for each field of study in consultation with faculty on the Advisory Committee. It is expected that duration of the examination of each field of study should be the equivalent of three hours of closed-book exam setting; however, alternate formats (e.g., a 24-hour-take-home exam) are permitted. The written exams for all Advisory Committee members that choose to participate in this part of the examination should be completed within five consecutive working days.

Prior to scheduling the preliminary examination with the other committee members, the committee chair will review the eligibility criteria with the student, using the Preliminary Examination Checklist to ensure the student is ready for the examination. The following list of eligibility requirements applies.

- Student is registered at Texas A&M University for the semester or summer term during which any portion of the preliminary examination may fall. If the entire examination falls between semesters, then the student must be registered for the term immediately preceding the examination.
- An approved degree plan was on file with the OGAPS at least 90 days prior to the first written examination.
- Student's cumulative GPR is at least 3.000.
- Student's degree plan GPR is at least 3.000.
- All English language proficiency requirements have been satisfied.
- All committee members have scheduled or waived the written portion and agreed to attend the oral portion of the examination or have found a substitute. Only one substitution is allowed and it cannot be for the committee chair.
- At the end of the semester in which the exam is given, there are no more than 6 hours of coursework remaining on the degree plan (except 681, 684, 690, 691). The head of the student's department has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.

- The time span from the first written examination to the oral is **no more than three weeks**. The head of the student's department has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.

Through the preliminary examination, the student's advisory committee should satisfy itself that the student has demonstrated the following qualifications: 1) a mastery of the subject matter of all fields in the program; and 2) an adequate knowledge of the literature in these fields and an ability to carry out bibliographical research.

The chair of the student's advisory committee is responsible for making all written examinations available to the members of the advisory committee before the oral portion of the preliminary examination. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissention is required to pass a student on his or her preliminary exam.

The chair of the advisory committee will promptly report the results of the Preliminary Examination to the OGAPS and to the Graduate Director, using the Report of Doctoral Preliminary Examination form 5 and the Preliminary Examination checklist. Both forms must have the appropriate signatures. These forms should be submitted to the OGAPS within 10 working days of the scheduled preliminary examination.

The Report of the Preliminary Examination form must be submitted with original signatures of the approved committee members. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, their signature must also be included on the form submitted to the OGAPS. The original signature of the department head is also required on the form.

After passing the required oral and written preliminary examinations for the doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination. Upon approval of the student's advisory committee, with no more than one member dissenting, and approval of the OGAPS, a student who has failed the preliminary examination may be given one re-examination. Adequate time must be given to permit the student to address the inadequacies emerging from the first examination (normally six months). The student and the advisory committee should jointly negotiate a mutually acceptable date for this purpose. Students in the 96 Hour Ph.D. program who fail a Preliminary Examination a second time will given a terminal thesis Masters.

### **Ph.D. Dissertation Research Proposal (96- and 64-hour Options)**

The general field of research to be used for the dissertation should be agreed on by the student and the advisory committee at their first meeting, as a basis for selecting the proper courses to support the proposed research. As soon as the research project can be outlined in reasonable detail, the dissertation research proposal should be developed in consultation with the student's Advisory Committee. The Ph.D. dissertation proposal is a plan of action and contract between student and Advisory Committee that outlines the research to be conducted for the dissertation. The proposal identifies the problem to be studied, surveys previous theoretical and/or applied research surrounding the problem, identifies the methodology that will be employed in the study, and outlines how the results will be analyzed in the context of the appropriate body of geographic literature. The Committee's examination of the Dissertation Proposal is to determine whether or not the student is prepared to conduct the dissertation research project.

Dissertation proposals should conform to the guidelines stated in the NSF's Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement award program. PhD dissertation proposals must be defended publicly; announcement must be made two weeks prior to the department by email and by posting flyers on



bulletin boards in O&M and CSA buildings. Departmental requirements are that the **dissertation proposal must be defended and filed no later than the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year**. Proposals must have a proposal Title Page attached to it. The Dissertation proposal should be approved by all of the student's advisory committee, at which time the feasibility of the proposed research and the adequacy of available facilities should be reviewed. The approved proposal, signed by all members of the student's advisory committee, the head of the student's major department, must be submitted to the OGAPS (with a copy to the Graduate Director) at least 20 working days prior to the submission of the Request for the Final Examination.

The advisory committee determines the appropriate scope and quality of the traditional or "three paper" dissertation and the dissertation proposal defense is a good time for the students to seek guidance on the committee's expectations for the dissertation.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety (<https://vpr.tamu.edu/division-resources/research-compliance-and-biosafety>) to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained on the website <http://rcb.tamu.edu>.

### **Final Examination/Dissertation Defense (96- and 64-hour Options)**

After writing and submitting an approved dissertation to the student's advisor and committee, the student is required to orally defend the dissertation in a ~three-hour exam presided over by the student's advisor and committee members. This exam requires the student to defend the research he/she has conducted. Examination of the research questions, the research paradigm, methodology, results, problems encountered, etc. are all considered legitimate areas for questioning by the committee. **The final examination is not to be administered until the dissertation or record of study is available in substantially final form to the student's advisory committee, and all concerned have had adequate time to review the document.** The Geography department requires that all committee members will have at least two weeks to read the dissertation before the defense. This should be the draft actually defended, not an earlier iteration. This draft should also be sent to the Graduate Director for posting on the current learning management site accessible to all Geography Department faculty. Additionally, all English Language Proficiency requirements must be satisfied prior to scheduling the examination. All PhD dissertation defenses must be defended publicly; announcement must be made two weeks prior to the department by email and by posting flyers on bulletin boards in O&M and CSA buildings.

Whereas the final examination may cover the broad field of the candidate's training, it is presumed that the major portion of the time will be devoted to the dissertation and closely allied topics. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on their exam. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings to allow for a closed session of questions by the Advisory Committee.

Additional OGAPS requirements dictate that the candidate for the doctoral degree must pass a final examination by deadline dates announced in the "OGAPS Calendar" each semester or summer term. The doctoral student is allowed only one opportunity to take the final examination. No student may be given a final examination unless his or her current official cumulative and degree plan GPAs are **3.000 or better and he or she has been admitted to candidacy. No unabsolved**

**grades of D, F, or U for any course can be listed on the degree plan.** To absolve a deficient grade, a student must repeat the course and achieve a grade of C or better. A student must have completed all coursework on his or her degree plan with the exception of 691 (research), 692 (Professional Study), or 791 hours. The student must be registered for all remaining hours; no hours remain to be taken on the degree plan. The preliminary examination results must have been submitted to the OGAPS 14 weeks prior to the date of the defense. The research proposal must have been submitted to the OGAPS 25 working days prior to the date of the final examination/defense. Any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the OGAPS prior to the approval of the final examination. The request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to the OGAPS **a minimum of 10 working days in advance** of the scheduled date. Examination/Defense results must be submitted to the OGAPS within 10 working days of the scheduled examination/defense date. **The OGAPS must be notified in writing of any cancellations.**

The student's advisory committee will conduct this examination. **The final examination is not to be administered until the dissertation or record of study is available in substantially final form to the student's advisory committee, and all concerned have had adequate time to review the document.** Additionally, all English Language Proficiency requirements must be satisfied prior to scheduling the examination. Whereas the final examination may cover the broad field of the candidate's training, it is presumed that the major portion of the time will be devoted to the dissertation and closely allied topics. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the chair of the advisory committee, be invited to attend a final examination for an advanced degree. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam. A department can have a stricter requirement provided there is consistency within all degree programs within a department. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings.

The advisory committee will submit its recommendations on the appropriate Report of the Final Examination for Doctoral Candidates form to the OGAPS regarding acceptability of the candidate for the doctoral degree. A student must be registered in the University in the semester or summer term in which the final examination is taken.

The Report of the Final Examination Form must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the OGAPS. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must be included on the form submitted to the OGAPS.

## **Dissertation**

The ability to perform independent research must be demonstrated by the dissertation, **which must be the original work of the candidate.** Whereas acceptance of the dissertation is based primarily on its scholarly merit, it must also exhibit creditable literary workmanship. The format of the dissertation must be acceptable to the OGAPS. Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation are available in the *Thesis Manual*, which is available online at <http://ogaps.tamu.edu>.

After successful defense and approval by the student's advisory committee and the head of the student's major department a student must submit his/her dissertation in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file must be uploaded to the website, <http://ogaps.tamu.edu>. Additionally, a signed paper approval form with original signatures must be received by the OGAPS. Both the PDF file and the signed approval form are required by the deadline.

Deadline dates for submitting are announced each semester or summer term in the OGAPS Calendar (see Time Limit statement). These dates also can be accessed via the website <http://ogaps.tamu.edu>.

Each student who submits a document for review is assessed a one-time thesis/dissertation processing fee through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After commencement, dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

**A dissertation that is deemed unacceptable by the OGAPS because of excessive corrections will be returned to the student's department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty.** The manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire review process must begin anew. All original submittal deadlines must be met during the resubmittal process in order to graduate.

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GEOGRAPHY (96-HOURS) TIMELINE TO DEGREE

1 <sup>st</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take GEOG 610, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Take other courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Build advisory committee File degree plan with the Graduate Committee (no later than Aug. 1) Take GEOG 611, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Qualifying paper topic proposal to the advisory committee Take other courses
2 <sup>nd</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Get approval on degree plan (at the beginning of the semester) File degree plan with OGAPS (within two weeks following departmental approval) Take courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take courses Turn in your qualifying paper Take your preliminary exam
3 <sup>rd</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take GEOG 691
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research Defend your dissertation proposal
4 <sup>th</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research
5 <sup>th</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research Final examination/dissertation defense (note the early deadlines by OGAPS, i.e., last day to take the exam is in early March) Graduate in May

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GEOGRAPHY (64-HOURS)  
TIMELINE TO DEGREE**

1 <sup>st</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take GEOG 610, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Take other courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Build advisory committee File degree plan with the Graduate Committee (no later than Aug. 1) Take GEOG 611, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Develop dissertation proposal draft Take other courses
2 <sup>nd</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Get approval on degree plan (at the beginning of the semester) File degree plan with OGAPS (within two weeks following departmental approval) Take courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take courses Take GEOG 691 Take your preliminary exam
3 <sup>rd</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take GEOG 691 Defend your dissertation proposal
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research
4 <sup>th</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take GEOG 691 Conduct dissertation research Final examination/dissertation defense (note the early deadlines by OGAPS, i.e., last day to take the exam is in early March) Graduate in May

## OGAPS STEPS TO FULFILL DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

STEP	WHAT TO DO	WHEN	APPROVED BY
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester registration.	Graduate advisor
2	Establish advisory committee; submit your <u>degree plan online</u> .	Following the deadline imposed by the student's college and approved no later than 90 days prior to the preliminary exam.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and OGAPS
3	Complete course work detailed on the approved degree plan.	Before preliminary exam.	Complete course work detailed on the approved degree plan.
4	Complete Preliminary Examination and Submit <u>Checklist and the Report of the Preliminary Exam</u> . (Please see the <u>Preliminary Exam Requirements</u> )	The student should complete the Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the semester following the completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan. Results must be received by OGAPS 10 working days after exam date.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and OGAPS
5	Submit research proposal for dissertation or record of study and the <u>Research Proposal Approval Form</u> to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.	At least 20 working days prior to submission of the Request and Announcement of Final Examination.	Advisory committee, department head or intercollegiate faculty chair, Research Compliance and Biosafety, and OGAPS
6	Complete residence requirement. (Check with your department to determine if there is a residency requirement.)	Before submitting request to schedule final oral examination.	OGAPS
7	Apply for a degree online at the <u>Howdy portal</u> ; pay graduation fee.	During the first week of the final semester; pay graduation fee after graduate application is submitted; see <u>OGAPS calendar</u> for deadlines.	OGAPS
8	Submit <u>Request and Announcement of Final Examination</u> to hold and announce final examination.	Must be received by OGAPS at least 10 working days before final exam date; see OGAPS calendar for deadlines.	Advisory committee, department head or intercollegiate faculty chair, and OGAPS
9	Successfully complete final examination.	The Report of the Final Examination form should be submitted to OGAPS within 10 days following the exam by the department.	Advisory committee and OGAPS
10	Upload one approved final copy of the dissertation or record of study as a single pdf file to <u>etd.tamu.edu</u> and submit the fully signed <u>Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form</u> to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.	See <u>OGAPS calendar</u> for deadlines.	Advisory committee, department head or intercollegiate faculty chair, and Office of Graduate and Professional Studies
11	Graduation; arrange for cap and gown.   <u>More information</u>		

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GEOGRAPHY DEGREE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (96- and 64-hour Options)**

For additional requirements on residence, continuous registration, time limit, foreign languages, and application for degree, refer to the following web page:

<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/colleges-schools-interdisciplinary/geosciences/geography/phd/#additionalrequirements>

### **Residence**

A student who enters the doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree must spend one academic year plus one semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. A student who holds master's degree when he/she enters doctoral degree program must spend one academic year in resident study. One academic year may include two adjacent regular semesters or one regular semester and one adjacent 10-week summer semester. The third semester is not required to be adjacent to the one year. Enrollment for each semester must be a minimum of 9 credit hours each to satisfy the residence requirement.

To satisfy the residence requirement, the student must complete a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester or 10-week summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University for the required period. A student who enters a doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree may fulfill residence requirements in excess of one academic year (18 credit hours) by registration during summer sessions or by completion of a less-than-full course load (in this context a full course load is considered 9 credit hours per semester).

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, the student is required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of his/her employment to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. An employee should submit verification of his/her employment at the time he/she submits the degree plan

For detailed information in continuous registration, see *Residence Requirements* (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/degree-requirements/>)

### **Continuous Registration**

A student in a program leading to a Doctor of Philosophy who has completed all coursework on his/her degree plan other than 691(research) are required to be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed.

For detailed information in continuous registration, see *Continuous Registration Requirements* (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/registration-academic-status/>)

### **Time Limit**

**A Ph.D. student receiving funding from the department is expected to defend and graduate by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year.**

**All requirements for doctoral degrees must be completed within a period of ten consecutive calendar years for the degree to be granted.** A course will be considered valid until 10 years after the end of the semester in which it is taken. Graduate credit for coursework more than ten calendar years old at the time of the final oral examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

After passing the required preliminary oral and written examinations for a doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination.

A final corrected version of the dissertation or record of study in electronic format as a single PDF file must be cleared by the OGAPS no later than one year after the final examination or within the 10-year time limit, whichever occurs first. Failure to do so will result in the degree not being awarded.

## **Admission to Candidacy**

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have:

1. completed all formal coursework on the degree plan with the exception of any remaining 681, 684, 690 and 691.
2. a 3.0 Graduate GPA and a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0 with no grade lower than C in any course on the degree plan,
3. passed the preliminary examination (written and oral portions),
4. submitted an approved dissertation proposal,
5. met the residence requirements.

The final examination will not be authorized for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy.

## **Foreign Languages**

A student is required to possess a competent command of English. For English language proficiency requirements, see the Admissions section of this catalog.

## **99-Hour Cap on Doctoral Degrees**

In Texas, public colleges and universities are funded by the state according to the number of students enrolled. In accordance with legislation passed by the Texas Legislature, the number of hours for which state universities may receive subvention funding at the doctoral rate for any individual is limited to 99 hours. Texas A&M University and other universities will not receive subvention for hours in excess of the limit.

Institutions of higher education are allowed to charge the equivalent of nonresident tuition to a resident doctoral student who has enrolled in 100 or more semester credit hours of doctoral coursework.

A doctoral student at Texas A&M has seven years to complete his/her degree before being charged out-of-state tuition. A doctoral student who, after seven years of study, has accumulated 100 or more doctoral hours will be charged tuition at a rate equivalent to out-of-state tuition. Please note that the tuition increases will apply to Texas residents as well as students from other states and



countries who currently are charged tuition at the resident rate. This includes those doctoral students who hold GAT, GANT, and GAR appointments of 20 or more hours and recipients of competitive fellowships who receive more than \$1,000 per semester. Doctoral students who, after seven years of study, have not accumulated 100 hours are eligible to pay in-state tuition if otherwise eligible.

For count purposes, a year is counted as three semesters, normally fall, spring and summer. Using this system, a student is allowed 21 semesters as a G8 student to complete the doctoral degree before being penalized with the higher tuition rate. Any semester in which a G8 student is enrolled for a doctoral level course is counted.

## **Application for Degree**

For information on applying for your degree, please visit:

<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/degree-requirements/#graduation>

## MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) IN GEOGRAPHY DEGREE

Our graduate program offers an M.S. degree that may be obtained through either a thesis or a non-thesis option. Students are admitted to the program two times per year, in the fall and the spring semesters. While the thesis option is preferable for most students, the final decision on which option to select should be made by the student in close consultation with his/her advisory committee.

### Student's Advisory Committee (Thesis and Non-thesis Options)

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework in the student's first semester, the student will consult with the Graduate Director concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The student's advisory committee will consist of **no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty**, representative of the student's fields of study and research. The chair or the co-chair of the advisory committee must be a graduate faculty members in the Geography Department and **at least one of the members must have their primary appointment to a department other than the Geography Department.**

The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members located off campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair) with a member as the chair. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's research, has the responsibility for calling required meetings of the committee and for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student's academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head may request in writing to the Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student's advisory committee without a co-chair for up to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

If the chair of the student's advisory committee is unavailable for an extended time in any academic period during which the student is involved in activities relating to an internship or thesis (only for thesis option), and is registered for courses such as 684 and 691 (only for thesis option), the student may request, in writing, that the department head appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period.

**The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal and the thesis (for thesis option only), the final project (for non-thesis option only), and the final examination. In addition, the committee as a group and as individual members are responsible for advising the student on academic matters,** and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Geography Department Graduate Committee and to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) if warranted.

The committee members' approval on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign *en masse*.

## **Degree Plan Requirements (Thesis and Non-thesis Options)**

The student's advisory committee will evaluate the student's previous education and degree objectives. The student, in consultation with the committee, will develop a proposed degree plan.

**M.S. students must file degree plans with the Graduate Committee by the end of the student's first semester** (e.g., by December 31 for a student starting the M.S. program in the fall semester). Students must submit their degree plans as one file in PDF form, containing:

1. a *degree plan form* that lists the courses to be taken as well as the information on the advisory committee,
2. a *degree plan statement* covering the contents of the degree plan, including a research statement (for thesis option only), the justification of the advisory committee, and the justification of the courses listed in the degree plan.

Degree plan **MUST** be approved according to the following guidelines:

1. The student, in consultation with the student's advisory committee, will develop the proposed degree plan (including the degree plan form and degree plan statement).
2. The proposed degree plan will be submit by the chair of the student's advisory committee to the Graduate Director for approval by the Graduate Committee.
3. Approved degree plan will be submitted to the departmental voting faculty on a consent agenda for approval.
4. **Departmental review and approval will be completed no later than the beginning of the student's second semester** (e.g. January faculty meeting for a student starting the M.S. program in the fall semester).
5. **Within two weeks following the departmental approval, the degree plan will be uploaded and filed with the OGAPS in the correct format as follows:**
  - a. A student will submit the degree plan using the online Document Processing Submission System (<http://ogsdps.tamu.edu>).
  - b. A student submitting a proposed degree plan should designate on the official degree plan the appropriate program option.
6. Degree plan must be approved by the Department Head and the student's committee on OGAPS.

### ***Other Degree Plan Deadlines***

Completed degree plans **MUST** be submitted to OGAPS according to the following guidelines:

1. No later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination.
2. According to deadlines published in the OGAPS calendar and dates and deadlines documents each semester for that semester (<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/calendars/>).

### ***Changes to the Degree Plan***

Students who desire to modify degree plans after the degree plan has been approved should submit a request for the revision of the degree plan to the Graduate Director for approval prior to initiating those changes in OGAPS; in addition, the Department Head may act in emergencies.

Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisory committee to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student's Request for Final Examination or Request for Final Examination Exemption is approved by the OGAPS.

### **Credit Requirements (Thesis Option)**

The student will devote the major portion of his or her time to work in one or two closely related fields. Other work will be in supporting fields of interest. As a part of the degree plan, course work **MUST** be developed according to the following guidelines:

- a) A minimum of 32 semester credit hours of approved courses and research is required.
- b) The student must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 for all graduate level work completed at Texas A&M University.
- c) Department-wide **required** coursework is limited to:
  - a. GEOG 610: *Geographical Methods and Theory* (3 credits).
  - b. GEOG 611: *Geographical Research Design* (3 credits).
  - c. Two semesters of GEOG 681: *Geography Seminar* (0 credits).
- d) No more than 12 hours may be used in any combination of the following:
  - a. Not more than 8 hours of GEOG 691: *Research*;
  - b. Not more than 8 hours of GEOG 685: *Directed Studies*;
  - c. Not more than 8 hours of GEOG 684: *Professional Internship*.
- e) At least 18 (of the 32) hours must be courses in GEOG (these 18 hours include GEOG 691 and GEOG 685).
- f) The student must complete GEOG 610 and GEOG 611 the first time they are offered after enrolling in the program. *No waivers are granted to excuse students from GEOG 610 and GEOG 611.*
- g) A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate (300, 400) courses are permitted.
- h) The total credit hours that come from online courses taken must be less than 16 hours (of the 32).

### **Credit Requirements (Non-thesis Option)**

The student will devote the major portion of his or her time to work in one or two closely related fields. Other work will be in supporting fields of interest. As a part of the degree plan, course work **MUST** be developed according to the following guidelines:

1. A minimum of 36 semester credit hours of approved courses and research is required.
2. The student must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 for all graduate level work completed at Texas A&M University.

3. Department-wide **required** coursework is limited to:
  - a. GEOG 610: *Geographical Methods and Theory* (3 credits).
  - b. GEOG 611: *Geographical Research Design* (3 credits).
  - c. Two semesters of GEOG 681: *Geography Seminar* (0 credits).
4. GEOG 691: *Research* is not permitted.
5. No more than 8 hours of GEOG 684: *Professional Internship* is permitted.
6. No more than 8 hours of GEOG 685: *Directed Studies* is permitted.
7. At least 18 (of the 36) hours must be courses in GEOG (these 18 hours include GEOG 691 and GEOG 685).
8. The student must complete GEOG 610 and GEOG 611 the first time they are offered after enrolling in the program. *No waivers are granted to excuse students from GEOG 610 and GEOG 611.*
9. At least 6 (of the 36) hours must be in supporting fields;
10. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate (300, 400) courses are permitted.
11. The total credit hours that come from online courses taken must be less than 18 hours (of the 32).

### **Transfer of Credit (Thesis and Non-thesis Options)**

A student who has earned 12 hours of graduate credit in residence at Texas A&M University may be authorized to transfer courses in excess of the limits prescribed below upon the advice of the advisory committee and with the approval of the OGAPS. Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater may be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Otherwise, the limitations stated in the following section apply. Coursework **in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit.** Courses appearing on the degree plan with grades of D, F or U may not be absolved by transfer work. Credit for research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours or equated to semester credit hours. An official transcript from the university at which the transfer coursework was taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPR.

## Limitations on the Use of Transfer, Extension and Certain Other Courses (Thesis and Non-thesis Options)

Some departments may have more restrictive requirements for transfer work. If otherwise acceptable, certain courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the master's degree under the following limitations.

1. The maximum number of credit hours which may be considered for transfer credit is the greater of 12 hours or one-third (1/3) of the total hours of a degree plan. The following restrictions apply:
  - o Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution, or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater will be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the student was in degree-seeking status at Texas A&M University, or the student was in degree-seeking status at the institution at which the courses were taken; and if the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution.
  - o Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable for degree plan credit.
2. The maximum number of credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate non-degree (G6) classification at Texas A&M University which may be considered for application to the degree plan is 12.
3. A zero credit GEOG 684: *Professional Internship* and GEOG 685: *Directed Studies* course is only allowed for non-thesis master's students. Other courses, including GEOG 691: *Directed Studies* research hours, are not eligible for zero credit.
4. Not more than 12 hours may be used in any combination of the following categories:
  - o Not more than 8 hours of GEOG 691
  - o Not more than 8 hours of GEOG 684
  - o Not more than 8 hours of GEOG 685
5. A maximum of 0 hours of GEOG 681: *Seminar*.
6. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate courses (300- or 400-level).
7. For graduate courses of three weeks' duration or less, taken at other institutions, up to 1 hour of credit may be obtained for each five-day week of coursework. Each week of coursework must include at least 15 contact hours.
8. Continuing education courses may not be used for graduate credit.
9. Extension courses are not acceptable for credit.

Exceptions will be permitted only in unusual cases and when petitioned by the student's advisory committee and approved by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

A maximum of 4 credit hours of GEOG 684, 8 credit hours of GEOG 685, and up to 3 credit hours of GEOG 695 (Frontiers in Research) may be used toward the non-thesis option degree. In addition, any combination of 684, 685 and 695 may not exceed 25 percent of the total credit hour requirement shown on the individual degree plan.

## Thesis Requirements (Thesis Option)

The student is required to complete an acceptable M.S. thesis. The thesis must reflect a comprehensive understanding of the pertinent literature and express in clear English, the problem(s) for study, the method, significance and results of the student's original research. Guidelines for the preparation of the thesis are available in the *Thesis Manual*, which is available online at the OGAPS (<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/Buttons/Forms-Information>).

### *Thesis Proposal*

The student must prepare a thesis proposal for approval by the advisory committee and the head of the department head. The proposal is usually completed as a required component of GEOG 611.

**Thesis proposal must be approved by the student's committee and submitted to the Graduate Committee by start of the second academic year students is enrolled** (e.g. ~August 30<sup>th</sup>).

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at (979) 458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained on the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety (<https://rcb.tamu.edu/>).

### *Additional Deadlines*

This proposal must be submitted to the OGAPS at least 20 working days prior to the submission of the request for the final examination. In addition, there are specific deadlines in OGAPS to submit thesis research proposal for graduation in a particular semester (e.g., for Spring 2019 graduation, the deadline is January 18). For the OGAPS deadlines and additional requirements, please refer to the relevant semester info at OGAPS Calendars & Deadlines (<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/calendars/>).

## Final Examination (Thesis and Non-thesis Options)

**A student must pass a final examination (i.e., thesis defense for thesis option, final exam for non-thesis option) by dates announced each semester or summer term in the OGAPS** (e.g., last day to take final exam in Spring 2019 is March 8). For the OGAPS deadlines for a particular semester and additional requirements, please refer to the relevant semester info at OGAPS Calendars & Deadlines (<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/calendars/>)

In addition, to be eligible to take the final examination, **a student's GPR must be at least 3.000 for courses on the degree plan and for all courses completed at Texas A&M which are eligible to be applied to a graduate degree, and there must be no unabsolved grades of D, F or U for any course listed on the degree plan.** To absolve a deficient grade, the student must repeat the course at Texas A&M University and achieve a grade of C or better. All coursework on the degree plan must have been completed with the exception of those hours for which the student is registered. An approved thesis proposal (only for thesis option) must be on file in the OGAPS according to published deadlines prior to the final examination or submission of the request for exemption from the final examination.

**A request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to the OGAPS a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date for the examination** (e.g., for Spring 2019 graduation, the deadline is February 22). The OGAPS must be notified in writing of

**any cancellations.** A student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the final examination for the master's degree and that must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (summer terms are excluded).

**The final examination is an oral exam and covers the thesis (only for thesis option) or the extended project (only for non-thesis option) and all coursework taken on the degree plan.**

The examination is conducted by the student's advisory committee as finally constituted. The student must be registered in the University in the semester or summer term in which the final examination is taken. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the major professor, attend final examinations. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings. **A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam.**

**The Report of the Final Examination Form must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the OGAPS.** If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must also be submitted to the OGAPS. If necessary, multiple copies of the form may be submitted with different committee member original signatures. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must be included on the form submitted to the OGAPS.

### ***Thesis Option Requirements***

For thesis option, final examination **MUST** be carried out according to the following guidelines:

- a) **The thesis draft will be submitted to all committee members to read at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. This should be the draft actually defended, not an earlier iteration.**
- b) Defenses will not be scheduled until all committee members have received a draft to be defended.
- c) Thesis will be uploaded to the *Departmental Learning Management Repository* at the password-protected departmental website two weeks prior to the scheduled defense for review by interested faculty.
- d) Defenses will be announced to the entire department by paper announcements and email.
- e) The only portion of the defense that is closed to the public is the deliberation of the advisory committee.
- f) The final thesis document after a successful defense must be submitted in electronic format as a single PDF file to the *Departmental Learning Management Repository* at the password-protected departmental website.

A thesis option candidate may petition to be exempt from his/her final examination provided his/her degree plan GPR is 3.500 or greater and he/she has the approval of the advisory committee, the department head and the OGAPS. It is required that the petition for exemption be submitted the same semester the student intends to submit the thesis.

After successful defense (or exemption) and approval by the student's advisory committee and the department head, the student must submit his/her thesis in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file must be uploaded to the OGAPS website. Additionally, a signed paper approval form



with original signatures must be received by the OGAPS. The PDF file and the signed approval form are required by the deadline (e.g. for Spring 2019, last day to submit the signed approval form is March 22).

Deadline dates for submitting the thesis to OGAPS are announced each semester or summer term in the “OGAPS Calendar” (see Time Limit statement). These dates also can be accessed via the OGAPS website.

Each student who submits a document for review is assessed a one-time thesis processing fee through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis services provided. After commencement, theses and dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

**A thesis that is deemed unacceptable by the OGAPS because of excessive corrections will be returned to the student’s department head.** The manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire review process must begin again. All original submittal deadlines must be met during the resubmittal process to graduate that semester.

### ***Non-thesis Option Requirements***

For the non-thesis option, the student is required to complete an acceptable extended project. The research project can be related to (but not limited to) cartographic design, an appropriate computer program, an audio/visual presentation, or interactive teaching tools.

The final exam cannot be held prior to the mid-point of the semester if questions on the exam are based on courses in which the student is currently enrolled. If a student has completed all required degree plan coursework, the student is not required to be registered for classes in the semester the final examination is administered (unless he/she holds an assistantship). For specific final examination requirements, a student should check the program requirements for the degree which he/she is pursuing.

Exam results must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must also be submitted to the OGAPS.

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOGRAPHY (THESIS OPTION)  
TIMELINE TO DEGREE**

1 <sup>st</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Build advisory committee File degree plan with the Graduate Committee (by the end of the semester) Take GEOG 610, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Take other courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Get approval on degree plan (at the beginning of the semester) File degree plan with OGAPS (within two weeks following departmental approval) Take GEOG 611, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Develop thesis proposal Submit thesis proposal to advisory committee for approval Take other courses
2 <sup>nd</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	File the committee approved thesis proposal with the Graduate Committee (by the start of the semester) Conduct thesis research Take courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Conduct thesis research Take courses Final examination/thesis defense (note the early deadlines by OGAPS, i.e., last day to take the exam is in early March) Graduate in May

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOGRAPHY (NON-THESIS OPTION)  
TIMELINE TO DEGREE**

1 <sup>st</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Build advisory committee File degree plan with the Graduate Committee (by the end of the semester) Take GEOG 610, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Take other courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Get approval on degree plan (at the beginning of the semester) File degree plan with OGAPS (within two weeks following departmental approval) Take GEOG 611, GEOG 681 (0 credit) Take other courses
2 <sup>nd</sup> YEAR	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fall)	Take courses
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Spring)	Take courses Final examination (note the early deadlines by OGAPS, i.e., last day to take the exam is in early March) Graduate in May

## OGAPS STEPS TO FULFILL MASTER OF SCIENCE (BOTH THESIS AND NON-THESIS OPTIONS) DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

STEP	WHAT TO DO	WHEN	APPROVED BY
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester registration.	Graduate advisor
2	Establish advisory committee; submit your <a href="#">degree plan online</a> .	Following the deadline imposed by the student's college and approved no later than 90 days prior to the request of final oral or thesis defense; see OGAPS calendar.	Advisory committee, department head, and OGAPS
3	If thesis is required, submit thesis research proposal and <a href="#">Research Proposal Approval Form</a> to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.	Must be submitted no later than 20 working days prior to submitting the request and announcement of final examination.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, Research Compliance and Biosafety, and OGAPS
4	Apply for a degree online at the <a href="#">Howdy portal</a> ; pay graduation fee.	During the first week of final semester; pay graduation fee after graduate application is submitted; see OGAPS calendar.	OGAPS
5	Check to make sure degree program and advisory committee are up-to-date, and course work is complete.	Well before submitting request to schedule final examination.	Advisory committee, graduate advisor and department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty
6	Complete residence requirement. (Check with your department to determine if there is a residency requirement.)	If applicable, before or during final semester.	OGAPS
7	Submit <a href="#">Request and Announcement of Final Examination</a> to schedule final examination to OGAPS.	Must be received by OGAPS at least 10 working days before exam date. (See <a href="#">OGAPS calendar</a> for deadlines.)	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and OGAPS
8	Successfully complete final examination.	The Report of the Final Exam form should be submitted to OGAPS within 10 days following the exam date by the department.	Advisory committee and OGAPS
9	If required, upload one approved final copy of thesis as a single PDF file to <a href="http://etd.tamu.edu">etd.tamu.edu</a> and submit signed <a href="#">thesis approval form</a> to OGAPS.	See <a href="#">OGAPS calendar</a> for deadlines.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty and OGAPS
10	Graduation; arrange for cap and gown.   <a href="#">More information</a>		

## **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOGRAPHY DEGREE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (Thesis and Non-thesis Options)**

For additional requirements on residence, continuous registration, time limit, foreign languages, and application for degree, refer to the following web page:

<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/colleges-schools-interdisciplinary/geosciences/geography/ms/#additionalrequirements>

### **Residence**

In partial fulfillment of the residence requirement for the degree of Master of Science, the student must complete 9 resident credit hours during one regular semester or one 10-week summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. Upon recommendation of the student's advisory committee or department head, if appropriate, and with approval of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, a student may be granted exemption from this requirement. Such a petition, however, must be approved prior to the student's registration for the final 9 credit hours of required coursework.

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, the student is required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of his/her employment to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

For detailed information in continuous registration, see *Residence Requirements* (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/degree-requirements/>)

### **Continuous Registration**

A student in the thesis option of the Master of Science program who has completed all coursework on his/her degree plan other than GEOG 691 (research) is required to be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed.

For detailed information in continuous registration, see *Continuous Registration Requirements* (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/registration-academic-status/>)

### **Time Limit**

The Department of Geography observes a policy with regard to time limits for degree completion. The department will fund MS students for a maximum of three years; students in the MS program for more than three years are ineligible for departmental GAT or GANT funding.

All degree requirements must be completed within a period of seven consecutive years for the degree to be granted. A course will be considered valid until seven years after the end of the semester in which it is taken. Graduate credit for coursework which is more than seven calendar years old at the time of the final examination (oral or written) may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

A student who has chosen the thesis option must have the final corrected version of the thesis cleared by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies no later than one year after the final

examination, or approval of a petition for exemption from the final exam, or within the seven-year time limit, whichever occurs first. Failure to do so will result in the degree not being awarded.

### **Foreign Languages**

No specific language requirement exists for the Master of Science degree.

### **Application for Degree**

For information on applying for your degree, please visit:

<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/degree-requirements/#graduation>

# **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS**

[Work in progress].