

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
**GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK\***

## INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Program of the Department of Geography, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill aims to produce leading scholars and practitioners who will make vital contributions to contemporary geographical, social, and environmental knowledge, research, teaching, and institutions. We approach this goal by creating an environment in which exceptional PhD and MA students can draw on the strengths of faculty and research centers to develop and sharpen their own research interests, capabilities, and programs around critical geographical problems. The graduate curriculum is designed to promote a broad sense of the Geographical tradition in its evolving relationship with other sciences, social sciences, and humanities disciplines, and to provide a disciplinary and inter-disciplinary platform for more specialized scientific and scholarly investigation.

The Program offers opportunities for graduate students to receive training in varied and integrated aspects of the discipline and to work directly with faculty members on specific research projects. Master's and Doctoral Degrees are offered, but our programmatic focus is on the Doctoral Degree. In as far as possible, all programs are tailored to the needs and interests of the individual student. The student's Academic Advisor and Committee Members have prime responsibility for developing, with the student, an appropriate course sequence and research program and for providing mentoring of the student. To foster maximum flexibility for individuals while ensuring a uniformly high standard of geographical training for all graduate students, the department has developed a series of policies and guidelines for students and faculty. These are outlined in this **Graduate Program Handbook**.

Degrees are offered through the Graduate School of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the present Departmental guidelines are additions to or amplifications of those of the Graduate School. Most of the required [forms](#) noted below can be found on the Graduate School's [website](#), while appendices to this Handbook provide detail for the discussions that follow along with some additional Departmental forms. The Department Handbook should be read in conjunction with the [Graduate School Handbook](#), which is available on-line from the Graduate School's [website](#).

*It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that all Departmental and University degree requirements are met. Students are advised to work closely with their academic advisor and committee members, consulting with the Director of Graduate Studies as necessary with any special problems, requests, interpretation of policies and procedures, and other Program needs. Students are also advised to consult with the Chair and Associate Chair of the Department as needed.*

## I. ADVISING AND COMMITTEES

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\* Revised 2017

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), four other faculty members, and one elected Graduate Student serve as the Department's Graduate Committee. The DGS is the Chair of the Graduate Committee. The DGS has full responsibility for the operation of the department's Graduate Program, in concert with the Graduate Committee. The graduate student member acts as a full member of the Committee except for personnel matters. The DGS administers the Graduate Program, and should be consulted about the program's policies and procedures as needed. The DGS serves as the Department's primary contact and liaison with the Graduate School, responsible for all facets of the department's Graduate Program, including student funding competitions conducted by the Graduate School and other strategic and operation elements of the program. The DGS also serves as the Director of Graduate Admissions for the Department. The DGS is allocated a 1-course per year reduction in teaching to direct the Department's Graduate Program, serve as Chair of the Graduate Committee, and lead the Department's recruitment of graduate students during the annual application process.

#### **A. Student Academic Advisory Committees**

Each student's Academic Advisory Committee, chaired by the Advisor, has the responsibility to assist the student in developing their graduate curriculum and research program, to evaluate the quality and rate of progress towards the degree, and to administer appropriate written and oral examinations. Geography departmental policies follow the Graduate School's requirements.

All beginning students are initially advised by the faculty member(s) who sponsored the student's admission and/or the DGS. The Academic Advisor has overall responsibility for the student's program, working in conjunction with the student's Academic Advisory Committee and the DGS as needed. The Advisor must be a regular member (i.e., tenured or tenure track) of the graduate faculty within the UNC Department of Geography. The Academic Advisor should be selected as early as possible; the Department encourages students to have their academic advisor in place by the end of the second semester in residence (See **Appendix 1: "Steps and Progress to a Degree"**). Although most students continue to work with their initial advisors, some may change advisors (for a variety of reasons) during their graduate career, and students should feel welcome to consult directly with the DGS about any Departmental advising concerns.

The Advisory Committee is formed by the student, in close consultation with the Academic Advisor, and must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and filed with the Graduate School. The Department recommends that the Advisory Committee be selected early in the third semester in residence for MA (form: **Appendix 4**) and by the end of the fourth semester in residence for PhD (form: **Report of Doctoral Committee Composition**) (See **Appendix 1**). The Committee, including the Academic Advisor, consists of the following:

**M.A. Committee:** At least three members are required. The Chair of the Committee and a majority of the Committee (and a majority of the faculty evaluating the student's exams) must be regular members of the UNC-Chapel Hill graduate faculty from the Department of Geography. The Committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies before the Master's Written Comprehensive Examination is taken (form: **Appendix 4**). The Department recommends that the MA Advisory Committee be selected early in the third semester in residence (See **Appendix 1**).

**Ph.D. Committee:** At least five members are required. The Chair of the Committee and a majority of the committee must be regular members of the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate Faculty

in the Department of Geography. Other members may be “Regular Graduate Faculty” (see below) or special appointees to the Graduate Faculty (i.e., not “regular graduate faculty” at UNC-Chapel Hill). At least one Committee member must be from outside the department, normally from another academic department at UNC-Chapel Hill. The composition of the Committee must be officially approved by the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the Doctoral Written Examination and officially accepted by the Graduate School prior to the Dissertation Proposal Defense ([form: Report of Doctoral Committee Composition](#)). The Department recommends that the PhD Advisory Committee be selected by the end of the fourth semester in residence (see [Appendix 1](#)).

A “regular” graduate faculty is tenured, tenure-track, and “recent” emeritus members of the UNC-Chapel Hill faculty. “Special appointees” are all other scholars (at UNC-Chapel Hill or off-campus). Graduate School approval is required to include “Special Appointees” on PhD committees. Adjunct Faculty in Geography is not a “regular graduate faculty” in Geography, and therefore cannot serve as the Chair of MA or PhD committees (though they may serve on committees as “external” members).

The Graduate School routinely considers requests from departments for External faculty to serve as members of graduate committees, so that remains a normal option for graduate students to consider in consultation with the Advisor. Graduate School regulations state that only faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill can serve as Chairs of Graduate Committees. The Department of Geography can, under very special circumstances (i.e., in the event of a faculty member leaving our department for another program) petition the Graduate School for an exception to the regulation and allow External faculty to serve as Chairs of Graduate Committees. The general rule-of-thumb used in the Department of Geography is whether or not a student has completed the Master's Exam or the Doctoral Qualifying Exam, and, in the case of doctoral students, has been officially declared "ABD" -- i.e., All-But-Dissertation. For students not yet having completed the doctoral exams, a UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of Geography Committee Chair is most appropriate, but for students who are ABD, retaining a faculty member who has moved from UNC-Chapel Hill to an alternate institution may be best for continuity of leadership of the Committee. Regardless of the circumstances, all requests by students to have an External faculty member on their committee, as Chair or Member, should be made in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies citing their rationale and special circumstances. Once formally established, changes in Committee composition will be considered by the student's Academic Advisor and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Where required by the Graduate School, a written petition must be signed by the student and the Academic Advisor.

## **B. Annual Student Assessment**

The Graduate School has required that (in addition to any other meetings with the Advisor and full Committee) the Academic Advisor should meet with the student at least once per year specifically to evaluate progress and recommend future actions. This review should be conducted in conjunction with the student's Annual Assessment that is required each spring by the Department of Geography, coordinated by the DGS and the Graduate Committee. The student Assessment has two parts – information requested from the student about their status and progress in the program and evidence of student scholarship; and information requested from the Academic Advisor to offer context to the student information and interpretation of the student's record of achievement during the assessment period (forms: [Appendix 7](#) (for students) and [Appendix 8](#) (for faculty)). The DGS examines the submitted information (student and faculty), consulting with the Graduate Committee and program faculty as needed, to identify evidence of suitable status and progress of the student in the

program, exceptional student scholarship, and any special problems or challenges that require DGS and/or Advisor attention.

Prior to each course registration period, students are encouraged to discuss the courses to be taken with her or his Academic Advisor (along with Committee Members as appropriate). All enrolled students planning to use university resources the following semester must pre-register. Students who are not pre-registered are ineligible for tuition remission.

## II. PROGRAM OF STUDY

The student and his/her Academic Advisor and Committee Members together formulate an appropriate program of study within the general guidelines indicated below.

### A. Required Courses

During the first two years in residence, all students are required to complete a three-course sequence (see Appendix 1) designed to foster their research abilities by acquainting them with the basic tenets of geographic thought, historical and contemporary geographical perspectives, methodologies and research design, and to provide the skills necessary to communicate the results of that research. The courses also introduce the students to individual faculty members and their research programs. The following courses are required:

**Geography 702: *Geographic Thought: History and Philosophy of Geography*.** This course, offered spring term, is required for all graduate students; to be taken in the student's first year of courses. Students with significant previous course work or other experience that duplicates the topics covered in 702 can, with their advisor's approval, petition the DGS to be excused from this requirement. Three credits are awarded for satisfactory completion. Beginning 2016-2017, the course will be offered fall term, to be taken in the student's third semester.

**Geography 703: *Research Design in Theory and Practice*.** This course, currently offered fall term, is required for all graduate students, to be taken in the student's second year of courses. Students with significant previous course work or other experience that duplicates the topics covered in 703 can, with their advisor's approval, petition the DGS to be excused from this requirement. Three credits are awarded for satisfactory completion. Beginning during 2016-2017, the course will be offered spring term, to be taken in *either* the student's second or fourth semester. Students should consult with their Academic Advisors to determine the best time in their curriculum to take the course.

**Geography 704: *Communicating Geography*.** This course is required for all incoming graduate students, and is to be taken in the first semester (fall) of the first year. Three credits are awarded for satisfactory completion.

### B. Choice of MA, MA/PhD, or PhD tracks

Students currently entering into the Department's Graduate Program are admitted for pursuit of both PhD and MA degrees. Students admitted to the PhD program *without* previous MA degree may elect to pursue a "traditional" MA and then PhD, or a "direct" PhD track (i.e., "fast track") that does not involve the awarding of a MA degree by the Graduate School. By the end of the third semester in

residence, these students must inform the Academic Advisor and DGS if they intend to pursue a “direct” PhD track (form: **Appendix 5a**); this track must be recommended by the academic advisor and approved by DGS. While not necessarily a binding and limiting decision, the student declaration is used to inform the DGS and Academic Advisor and Committee Members about the intentions of the student so that the most suitable course work and appropriate training experiences can be developed to meet the needs and goals of the student. The recommendation to bypass the MA degree, and any changes in student tracks, must be submitted in a letter to the DGS that is endorsed by the student and the Academic Advisor (see Appendix 5a; Appendix 1). Students who initially enrolled at the MA level may also, under exceptional circumstances, bypass the MA degree with the recommendation of the Academic Advisor and approval of DGS.

***Selected issues to consider in making a decision: The nature of the MA and PhD degrees***

These degrees have different goals and objectives:

- The MA is a training degree that involves original work, but commonly emphasizes the mastery of techniques within the student’s sub-discipline and their application to more narrowly defined geographic questions.
- The PhD is a research degree that must demonstrate not only the complete mastery of the field - literature, paradigms, techniques, etc. - but also the ability to conduct original, creative thinking, and the ability to identify and solve original problems that advance theory and practices in and across the sciences.

**C. Minimum Course Requirements**

a) ***For students entering the program with a Master’s degree*** earned from an academic unit and institution “other than” the Department of Geography at UNC-Chapel Hill:

1) PhD: at least 30 hours of course work (including directed research and readings courses) plus at least 6 hours of Geography 994 (Dissertation credits).

2) Course requirements in addition to the minimum may be set by the Academic Advisor and Committee to remedy deficiencies or to gain specific expertise.

b) ***For students entering the program with a Bachelor’s degree*** (BA/BS) there are 2 options:

1) The “terminal” MA and the “traditional” MA then PhD tracks:

i) MA: this requires at least 30 hours of course work (including directed research and readings courses) plus at least 3 hours of Geography 993 (Thesis credits).

ii) PhD: this requires at least 24 hours of additional course work (i.e., beyond the MA courses completed in the Department of Geography, UNC-Chapel Hill) plus at least 6 hours of Geography 994 (Dissertation credits).

iii) Course requirements in addition to the minimums may be set by the student’s Academic Advisor and Committee to remedy deficiencies or to gain specific expertise.

2) The BA/BS to PhD track:

i) Here there is no explicit MA, however, students may elect to complete a Master's Thesis, assuming course requirements are met, or students may elect to develop some other creative scholarly product, e.g., journal article or book chapter, in close consultation with their Academic Advisor and Committee.

ii) PhD: this requires: at least 54 hours total course work (including directed research and readings courses) plus at least 6 hours of Geography 994 (Dissertation credits).

iii) Course requirements in addition to the minimum may be set by the student's Academic Advisor and Dissertation Committee to remedy deficiencies or to gain specific expertise.

Thesis (Geography 993) and Dissertation (Geography 994) hours can only be taken after all required course work has been completed or in the final semester of course work with DGS approval. Students can enroll in "Special Work in Geography" (Geography 900) to develop research ideas, theories, and practices in any semester, as approved by the Academic Advisor. All independent studies and directed readings courses must be under the direction of graduate faculty and require completion of the form "**Geography – Graduate Independent Study**" (form: **Appendix 9**) with accompanying syllabus, and must be approved by the Academic Advisor and filed at the start of the semester with the Student Services Manager.

Students are strongly encouraged to include graduate seminars offered by the Department among their courses, in consultation with the Academic Advisor. The Department supports the Graduate School recommendation that, when possible, at least one-half of the courses be at the graduate level (numbered 700 and above) and above. There is no credit for courses numbered below the 400 level.

The Department does not offer a formal "Minor" as defined by the Graduate School, nor does it treat any foreign language requirement as different from any other type of course.

#### **D. Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Science**

The Department does offer a Graduate School approved Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Science (GIScience) that includes course requirements and a capstone project. The Certificate Program is administered separately from the Department's Graduate Program, and while approved by the Graduate School, students admitted into the Certificate Program are not admitted into the MA or PhD programs. Students already enrolled in the Graduate Program, however, *can* complete the Graduate Certificate in GIScience along with their MA and/or PhD degrees as part of their graduate programs (in consultation with the Academic Advisor). Upon completion of the Graduate Certificate Program, students receive a Certification of Achievement & Completion and their transcript is officially "stamped" by the UNC Registrar's Office signaling a student's satisfactory completion of the program. Information on the GIScience certificate program, can be found [here](#).

#### **E. Transfers, Deficiencies, and Inter-Institutional Registration**

The Department supports the transfer of credit as allowed by the Graduate School. Students desiring such credit should check with the Director of Graduate Studies ([form: Transfer Credit Recommendation](#)). Students frequently take courses at nearby Duke University and/or North Carolina State University through inter-institutional registration. These are treated as on-campus

courses.

It is assumed that all graduate students are familiar with the basic (BA/BS-level) concepts of physical, human, social, and regional geography, and quantitative and qualitative methods, as relevant to their sub-disciplines and areas of interest. Students lacking any of these general areas of competency will be expected, in consultation with the Academic Advisor, to rectify the deficiencies through a program of readings and study or through the auditing of appropriate courses.

#### **F. Registration Requirement**

The University requires students to be registered in the term (fall, spring, or summer) in which they do any academic work requiring interaction with faculty (e.g., advising, exams, defenses, etc.). This means that students who schedule thesis or dissertation defenses and exams in the summer (generally not encouraged, see below) are themselves responsible for summer registration and tuition since the tuition remission accompanying RA or TA awards does not cover summer registration and tuition. The Graduate School counts spring registration as extending until the first day of the first summer session (typically mid-May) and fall registration beginning with the first week of classes in the fall. Registration for either summer session (a minimum of 3 hours) will cover a student for the entire period between the end of spring and the beginning of fall.

### **III. EXAMINATIONS**

All examinations are scheduled by the Academic Advisor, in consultation with the student, the Thesis/Dissertation Committee, and the Director of Graduate Studies.

#### **A. Master of Arts Candidates**

##### ***1. Written comprehensive examination (MA Comps)***

This is a six-hour comprehensive examination of the field of geography, with emphasis on the courses taken for the MA degree and the focus of the approved thesis. Most questions will be of a methodological, conceptual, or problem oriented nature. This examination cannot be taken until all course work is complete or the final courses are in progress. The written exam is administered by the Academic Advisor (see below – *III.C. Administration of Written Examinations*).

##### ***2. Final oral examination (Thesis Defense)***

This is an oral defense of the thesis before the student's Advisory Committee. A brief public presentation immediately prior to the defense (typically 20-30 minutes, plus audience questions), previously advertised within the Department, is an integral part of the examination. Since faculty are not officially in residence during the summer, and thus are under no obligation to conduct examinations during that period, considerable advance planning is likely to be required if a summer defense is contemplated. Also see above regarding summer registration.

#### **B. Doctor of Philosophy Candidates**

##### ***1. Doctoral Written Examination (PhD Comps)***

The doctoral written examination, consisting of three examinations, each up to eight hours in length, explores the student's mastery of the area of specialization as well as geographic

theories and practices. The length of the exams will be determined by the Academic Advisor in consultation with the student, and with the student's Dissertation or Academic Advisory committee as needed. The doctoral written examination will commonly consist of:

- A.** Two examinations in the field of specialization (one examination may be replaced by a field or library research problem).
- B.** One examination either relating to the field of specialization or to broader geographical concepts and/or, if appropriate, to a specific regional area. This exam cannot be taken until the final semester of course work, but must be taken within one year of the completion of such course work. The written exam is administered by the Academic Advisor (see below – *III.C. Administration of Written Examinations*).

### **2. Doctoral Oral Examination (Proposal Defense)**

This exam should be taken soon after successful completion of the written examination (normally within 1-2 months). The Examining Committee is composed of the five (or more) members of the student's Dissertation or Academic Advisory Committee. This is primarily an oral defense of the dissertation proposal that assesses scholarly preparation and project feasibility, but may also include questions following up on the candidate's written exams.

### **3. Final Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense)**

This is a defense of the dissertation. It is in two parts:

- A.** First is a **public presentation** of the dissertation research. It must be advertised in appropriate ways (on the Department's faculty and graduate student listservs as well as advertisements posted in the Department and sent to the broader campus community as appropriate) no less than one week prior to the defense. This notice should include the title of the work, name of the student and of his/her Advisor and Academic Advisory Committee members, and an abstract. The public presentation is typically 30-40 minutes in length, plus audience questions.

A minimum of two weeks is required for review of the "approved" (by the Academic Advisor) dissertation draft by the Academic Advisory Committee (some Committees may require more time). Public presentations and final examinations should, when possible, be scheduled at times when departmental graduate seminars are not being taught, taking place in Carolina Hall. There are to be no non-semester defenses (e.g., summers, spring/fall breaks) except by agreement by the student's committee and by petition to the DGS and/or Chair of the Department.

- B.** A **Committee Defense**, which is formally open to the public (except for private discussion among the Committee) but includes only questions from the student's Dissertation Committee (typically 2-3 hours). This is held after the public lecture, at a time mutually agreeable to the candidate and the Academic Advisory Committee. Since faculty are not officially in residence during the summer, and thus are under no obligation to conduct examinations during that period, considerable advance planning is likely to be required if a summer defense is contemplated. Also see above regarding summer registration.

### **C. Administration of Written Examinations**

No less than one month prior to the examination, the student should provide to the Academic Advisor and Committee Members a statement showing (a) courses taken for the Ph.D. and/or M.A.



degree, as appropriate, (b) a ~5-page overview (~3-page for MA) of the proposed thesis/dissertation topic, as specified by the student's Academic Advisor, (c) a research timetable, and (d) a tentative statement of long-range career plans.

**For MA candidates:** the student's Committee will develop the examination that is administered by the Academic Advisor. Instructors of courses taken inside and outside the Department may be invited to submit questions at the discretion of the Advisor in formulating the exam.

**For PhD candidates:** the student's Committee will develop the examination that is administered by the Academic Advisor. Other pertinent individuals may also be invited to submit questions at the discretion of the Advisor in formulating the exam.

The Advisor (in consultation with the Committee as needed) will construct a balanced examination from the submitted questions. For each question, the individual submitting the question will have responsibility for grading it, along with the Advisor, using the standard graduate student grading scale: High Pass (H), Pass (P), Low Pass (L), (include +/- as appropriate), Fail (F). Results will be transmitted to the Academic Advisor. Some advisors may also wish to assign a "secondary reader" for each question among the Committee members.

The Academic Advisor and Committee will evaluate the student's performance. If there is no grade of "L" or lower, the student unconditionally passes. A candidate receiving at least one "F" from at least two members of the Committee automatically fails. In the intermediate situation, the Committee must meet to evaluate options. Some form of re-testing or remedial work may be required, as determined by the Academic Advisor and Committee.

In normal circumstances, the written examination is a "closed book" examination. While the use of word processors is encouraged, to ensure the integrity of the "closed book" approach, the Academic Advisor and Committee may require use of a specific machine that contains a word processing program and spell- and grammar-checker with which the candidate is familiar.

For the PhD examination a field or library research problem may be substituted for one of the four-hour examinations. Commonly this is a single research question that the student answers, using any resources available, within a specific time. Twenty-four hours is normally regarded as being approximately equivalent to the four-hour closed book examination that it replaces. Clear guidelines on what is and is not acceptable during this extended examination period will be established by the Academic Advisor and Committee and explained to the student in written form. If a specific question requires a different approach, it will be clearly indicated by the questioner prior to the examination so that suitable arrangements can be made. Further, the constraints will be made clear to the candidate at or, if appropriate, prior to the examination.

#### IV. THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

Throughout the preparation of the thesis or dissertation, including proposal development, it is expected that the student will maintain in close contact with the Academic Advisor and the Committee. The Academic Advisor will play the major guidance role, but all Committee members will have areas where their expertise is beneficial, and they should be consulted regularly. It is a requirement that the student provide an Assessment Report of progress towards the degree to the Academic Advisor and Committee at least once per year, likely coincident with the annual Graduate Student Assessment conducted each spring (see **Appendix 7 & 8**).

The Graduate School publishes a "[Guide to Theses and Dissertations](#)" that provides details of the required submission format. A variety of reference and note styles are allowed. The Department accepts whichever

style is appropriate for a particular sub-discipline.

Digital submissions of theses and dissertations are required by the Graduate School. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain authorization signatures from the Academic Advisor and Committee members prior to the submission of the final approved draft of the Master's thesis or Doctoral dissertation to the Graduate School. It is advisable that thesis and dissertation candidates obtain "authorizing signatures" from the Academic Advisor and Committee prior to submission of the final "approved" version of document to the Graduate School.

## V. PROGRESS TO A DEGREE

### A. Satisfactory Progress

All students are expected to make steady and continuous progress towards their degree. This progress is represented by the series of "milestones" given in Appendix 1. This Appendix provides the basic yardstick against which progress is evaluated, although the rate of progress or the order of events may vary slightly from student to student and advisor to advisor.

Progress, as recorded in the department's annual (spring) Graduate Student Assessment, is evaluated by the Advisor and the DGS (in consultation with the Graduate Committee as needed) at the end of each year. Students who, after suitable warning, are not making satisfactory progress, will not be supported from departmental resources.

### B. Continuous Registration

All students must register for any semester in which they use University resources, including faculty time. Once the formal course work is complete, students may register for 3 credit hours of Geography 993 or Geography 994 (commonly called thesis or dissertation hours), following Graduate School regulations. Students who have not completed their degrees, but are not using University resources (e.g., students out of contact in the field), may either simply not register or apply for a formal leave of absence. The latter, if approved by the Department and granted by the Graduate School, extends the degree time limits by the period of the leave. In either case the student is deemed to have left the program and **must reapply for admission** to the Graduate School through the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

### C. Degree Time Limits

The Graduate School stipulates a limit of 5-years for the MA and 8-years for the PhD between the time of first registration in the UNC Graduate School and the completion of the degree.

A student may petition the department's DGS and, if approved, then the Graduate School for an extension of the total time limits. The Department believes that a student who has maintained satisfactory progress should have completed the degree well before these limits are encountered, and is reluctant to support any such petition. Should an extension be granted, it is likely that additional course work and/or retesting of the written examination material may be required of the student to ensure that he/she is familiar with recent advances in the discipline.

## VI. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The development of a professional demeanor and attitude is an integral part of the degree program. The Department seeks to foster this by providing opportunities outside the formal course work and

research project environment. Thus, every student is expected to participate in Departmental academic activities, including attendance at lectures by guest speakers and Departmental colloquia. Students are also encouraged to attend professional meetings. Where possible and when needed, Departmental funds are provided to facilitate participation.

In the later stages of their degree program, students should present papers at professional meetings as part of their training. This is regarded as one measure of satisfactory progress. Students are also encouraged to organize or chair sessions, or act as paper discussants, at such meetings. The Department also encourages the submission of research results for publication in refereed journals, edited volumes, and other scholarly publications. The Department also, in conjunction with the UNC Graduate School and the Office of Research Services, encourages the submission of research proposals to extramural funding agencies.

### **A. Teaching**

Teaching is likely to be an integral part of the careers of many students. Thus, the department offers opportunities for the orderly development of high-quality teaching skills. No teaching is required of any graduate student, but teaching is encouraged for most doctoral candidates. To this end, the Department has established a sequence of steps for the development of teaching skills. A document, *Guidelines and Principles for Graduate Student Teaching in Geography*, detailing these skills is appended to this document as **Appendix 3**. Student who assume overall course responsibility as Teaching Fellows are required to attend orientation and introductory teaching workshops conducted by the [UNC Center for Faculty Excellence](#) (CFE). The basic rules for teaching in the department follow.

### **B. Training Requirements**

1. Common training is required for all Graduate TAs prior to TA assignment. Those not initially in TA assignments may defer the training if desired. This training consists of:
  - a. Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) New TA orientation (offered before fall and spring semesters).
  - b. Departmental orientation covering departmental technology such as projection technology, copiers, processing of scantrons, etc.
  - c. Departmental orientation covering departmental policies regarding the role of TAs and faculty, evaluation and recognition, etc.
  - d. Further, TAs are strongly encouraged to participate in the CFE's short seminars and workshops offered during the semester.
2. Teaching assistantships should also be considered, in and of themselves, as a form of training – in pedagogy, communications with students, professional behavior, and specific course content – under the direction of the course instructor.
3. Focused extra training is required (in advance) for all Teaching Fellows (i.e., students with complete course responsibility).
  - a. To be eligible for a teaching fellow assignment, students must:
    - i. Request a course teaching assignment to the Associate Chair of the Department. There is no guarantee that the department will be able to

honor the request given budget, course, and schedule restraints.

ii. Have completed their PhD course work, or are in the final year of their course work for introductory courses.

iii. Be making satisfactory progress towards the degree as indicated by the student's Academic Advisor.

iv. Have completed a formal course on university teaching or a customized CFE course consultation, or have evidence of appropriate teaching experience. Exceptions will be granted only with documented evidence of completion of a similar course elsewhere or equivalent experience.

v. Participate in the Department's and the CFE's programs of teaching evaluation.

Opportunities for off-campus teaching frequently arise, either through a request to the Department or to an individual student. While such activities are encouraged, it is anticipated that the Graduate Committee will use the same criteria concerning progress as those in #3 above in recommending to the student whether or not to accept the assignment. The Department regards teaching a course as a full 20-hour per week task, which constitutes a full work load for a student receiving remuneration from University-related sources.

## **VII. STUDENT FINANCES**

### **A. Financial Support**

The Department strives to provide support for all students who require it in the form of teaching and research assistantships, and endeavors to maintain support throughout the student's program, given satisfactory academic progress (see Section V; Appendix 1). Several funding sources are available to the Department, and individual students are encouraged and assisted in seeking their own external funding.

Under normal circumstances and with students demonstrating satisfactory progress towards their degree, there are limits to the total length of time a student can expect to be funded using Department funds (excluding faculty research funds and fellowships). Below indicates the general funding intentions of the Department (as described in initial offers of funding from DGS):

- 2-years for MA
- 4-years for PhD with prior MA
- 5-years for PhD without prior MA

If funding is available, a 5<sup>th</sup> year (with prior MA) and 6<sup>th</sup> year (without prior MA) of funding will be provided to students in good standing who are making satisfactory process towards their degree. Funding will be as a teaching fellow with primary responsibility for a course. In exceptional and extenuating circumstances, such students may be awarded a TA assignment. Students who have not made adequate progress towards their degrees will not receive funding after 5-years except in exceptional cases and with extenuating circumstances. At a minimum, adequate progress refers to meeting the deadlines of the graduate program and having reached ABD status by the end of the spring semester of the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

## **B. Fellowships and Assistantships**

The Graduate School's website provides details of [fellowships and scholarships](#) competitively available to UNC Graduate Students. Some are directly administered by the University and are awarded in conjunction with the Department, while others, frequently circulated on Geography graduate listserv and other venues, are from extramural sources, and an individual must take a lead role in securing them. Most require no service to the University or the Department on the part of the recipient. They are designed to allow the recipient to engage full time in scholarly activity.

Most students are supported by Assistantships, which require departmental service. These are of two basic forms: Research Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships.

**Research Assistantships:** require that the recipient work with a specific faculty member on a particular research project. Frequently specialized skills are needed to undertake the required work. Since funds from sponsored research come to the Department from a variety of both extramural sources and on-campus research units, the nature of the work, and the time commitment required, depends on the project.

**Teaching Assistantships:** the role of teaching assistants (TAs) is to assist in the undergraduate instructional mission of the Department and University. Individual TA's are assigned to individual faculty members to assist in specific courses. As far as possible, assignments will be made in such a way that the student is exposed to a variety of teaching styles and subject matter and gains increasing experience and expertise throughout his/her graduate program. The normal maximum time commitment is an average of 20-hours per week during the regular semesters.

Prior to each semester, the Associate Chair of the Department requests for input from students and faculty, and assigns TAs to particular courses. In general the priority order for courses assigned TAs is:

1. Large (>100 student) Introductory Geography (courses at the 100 level) classes
2. For remaining resources, consideration will be given for:
  - a. additional resources for those teaching exceptionally large classes (>150),
  - b. courses with large laboratory content
  - c. courses being developed or significantly modified
  - d. other exceptional circumstances

## **C. Student Funding Policy**

Research Assistantship funding is provided for specific projects and is commonly awarded to specific students with particular skills or interests. Funding available for Teaching Assistantships, while closely tied to the teaching mission, covers a wide range of skills, so that the Department has more flexibility in awarding TA funding. The Student Funding Policy provides the basic guidelines for using TA funding to:

1. Optimize the use of all resources available to the Department, thus maximizing the benefit to the maximum number of people;
2. Minimize risk of any student who is making satisfactory progress within Departmental time limits being unable to complete a degree program because of withdrawal of funding;
3. Ensure that students are treated as equally as possible, while maintaining the flexibility of an individual faculty member's and/or student's research and education program;
4. Encourage the search for and use of all funding sources available to the Department and

its students.

Funding for graduate students is usually granted on an academic year (Fall through Spring Semesters) basis. Preliminary offers to students are usually made in the spring. Final TA assignments will be made immediately prior to the Fall Semester. Consequently:

1. Requests for funding source changes after the August final assignment must be approved by the Chair or Associate Chair of the Department. This policy does not concern the actual selection of students or the assignment of students to particular departmental duties or research projects. Students paid by sources that end in mid-year cannot anticipate Departmental (Teaching Assistant) funding for the balance of the year.
2. All funding beyond the first year is dependent on the satisfactory progress of the student as determined by course work results and/or the decision of the student's Academic Advisor, committee (if appropriate), and DGS.
3. The Department will endeavor to ensure that students who receive university-approved scholarships, fellowships, etc. that pay less than the current departmental TA rate will be topped-up from Departmental funds.
4. No student can normally receive, from university-related sources, remuneration for work involving more than 20-hours per week during the regular semester.

#### **D. Tuition and North Carolina Residency Status**

Agencies supporting graduate students through University-affiliated sources (e.g., Departmental Teaching Assistants, those funded by faculty grants, University Scholarship holders) pay directly to the University tuition at the rate applicable to North Carolina residents. For students who are not residents of North Carolina for tuition purposes and who are also paid from University-affiliated sources, the Department must cover the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates, hence it is critical to Department finances, and to our ability to recruit high quality graduate students, that continuing students who qualify for NC residency apply for state resident status as early as possible, usually at the end of their first year in the program. Upon moving to North Carolina, incoming students are advised to begin establishing residency *before the semester begins* through documentation including, but not limited to: North Carolina Driver's License; local bank account; utilities accounts; pet licenses (if applicable); etc. For more information on how to apply for North Carolina residency, please see the Graduate School's [website](#).

As described above, the Department of Geography provides 10/8/4 semesters of tuition support, including tuition remission and tuition awards, for eligible PhD, PhD entering with MA, and MA students, respectively, who are in good standing and making adequate progress in their programs of study. Under exceptional circumstances, students who exceed the 10/8/4 semester limit may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for a waiver of the rule on tuition support. The request should include: (1) a written request specifying the reason for the request and the stage in the student's program, and (2) a supporting letter of the faculty advisor signed by all departmental committee members, specifying that the student is making good progress and indicating the expected date of completion.

Awards of waivers will depend on the availability of tuition support funds.

*\* See appendices below\**

**APPENDIX 1:**  
**Steps and Progress to a Degree: Student Milestones**

<b>Semester #</b>	<b>MA/PhD (and MA) (54 hrs + thesis/diss.)</b>	<b>PhD Direct (54 hrs + diss.)</b>	<b>PhD with previous MA (30 hrs + diss.)</b>
Semester 1	-Course work (including GEOG 704)	-Course work (including GEOG 704)	-Course work (including GEOG 704)
Semester 2	-Course work (including GEOG 702) -Select MA advisor	-Course work (including GEOG 702) -Select PhD advisor	-Course work (including GEOG 702) -Select PhD advisor
Semester 3	-Course work (including GEOG 703) -Create MA committee (form: <b>Appendix 4</b> )	-Course work (including GEOG 703) <b>-Recommendation to Bypass MA degree</b> (form: <b>Appendix 5a</b> )	-Course work (including GEOG 703) -Create PhD committee (Semester 3/4) ( <a href="#">form</a> : <b>Report of Doctoral Committee Composition</b> )
Semester 4	-Course work if needed -MA Written Comps Exam -Defend MA Thesis (Final Oral Exam) ( <a href="#">form</a> : <b>Master's Comprehensive Exam Report</b> ) -Committee recommendation following MA completion (form: <b>Appendix 5b</b> )	-Course work -Create PhD committee (Semester 4/5) ( <a href="#">form</a> : <b>Report of Doctoral Committee Composition</b> )	-Course work if needed -Create PhD committee (Semester 3/4) ( <a href="#">form</a> : <b>Report of Doctoral Committee Composition</b> )
Semester 5	-Course work -Create PhD committee ( <a href="#">form</a> : <b>Report of Doctoral Committee Composition</b> )	-Course work -Create PhD committee (Semester 4/5) ( <a href="#">form</a> : <b>Report of Doctoral Committee Composition</b> )	-Course work if needed/Proposal development -PhD Comprehensive exams – Written exam and 1 <sup>st</sup> Oral exam (proposal defense) (Semester 5/6) ( <a href="#">forms</a> : <b>Report of Approved Doctoral Dissertation Project; Doctoral Exam Report</b> )
Semester 6	-Course work if needed/Proposal development -PhD Comprehensive exams – Written exam and 1 <sup>st</sup> Oral exam (proposal defense)(Semester 6/7) ( <a href="#">forms</a> : <b>Report of Approved Doctoral Dissertation Project; Doctoral Exam Report</b> )	-Course work if needed/Proposal development -PhD Comprehensive exams – Written exam and 1 <sup>st</sup> Oral exam (proposal defense)(Semester 6/7) ( <a href="#">forms</a> : <b>Report of Approved Doctoral Dissertation Project; Doctoral Exam Report</b> )	-PhD Comprehensive exams – Written exam and 1 <sup>st</sup> Oral exam (proposal defense) (Semester 5/6) ( <a href="#">forms</a> : <b>Report of Approved Doctoral Dissertation Project; Doctoral Exam Report</b> ) -Field/Lab work

Semester 7	-Course work if needed/Proposal development -PhD Comprehensive exams – Written exam and 1 <sup>st</sup> Oral exam (proposal defense)(Semester 6/7) ( <b>forms: Report of Approved Doctoral Dissertation Project; Doctoral Exam Report</b> )	-Course work if needed/Proposal development -PhD Comprehensive exams – Written exam and 1 <sup>st</sup> Oral exam (proposal defense)(Semester 6/7) ( <b>forms: Report of Approved Doctoral Dissertation Project; Doctoral Exam Report</b> )	-Field/Lab work
Semester 8	-Field/Lab work	-Field/Lab work	--PhD Final Oral Examination (Dissertation defense) ( <b>form: Doctoral Exam Report</b> )
Semester 9	-Field/Lab work	-Field/Lab work	<i>*Some students, particularly those engaged in extensive, field-based research, may require 1-2 additional semesters of graduate work.</i>
Semester 10	--PhD Final Oral Examination (Dissertation defense) ( <b>form: Doctoral Exam Report</b> )	--PhD Final Oral Examination (Dissertation defense) ( <b>form: Doctoral Exam Report</b> )	
Semester 11 or more	<i>*Some students, particularly those engaged in extensive, field-based research, may require 1-2 additional semesters of graduate work.</i>		

#### Steps and Progress to a Degree: Additional notes

- During their graduate careers, all students will normally be expected to undertake additional projects as part of their scholarly and professional development: presentation of conference papers, submission of articles to refereed journals, participation in departmental colloquia, review (referee)of journal papers and book chapters, organization of conference sessions, and submission of extramural research funding and fellowship proposals.
- While the above chart reflects a normal temporal model of student milestones, the timing may vary for different students depending on their research models, advisors, nature of the research project, time required in the field, availability of external funding, and other circumstances.
- The Academic Advisor has overall responsibility for the student’s program, working in conjunction with the student’s Academic Advisory Committee and the DGS as needed. Students with questions or concerns should discuss their programs with the Academic Advisor and, if appropriate, DGS.
- Forms designated as Appendix # can be found at the end of the Graduate Handbook; other forms identified can be found on the Graduate School’s [website](#) (also linked above).



## APPENDIX 2 REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL GRADUATE SCHOOL FORMS

All Graduate School forms referenced in this Handbook (among others) can be downloaded as pdf files from the Graduate School's [website](#). Available forms include:

For MA students:

- Master's Comprehensive Exam Report
- Report of Approved Substitute for Master's Thesis
- Recommendation to Proceed
- Recommendation to Bypass Master's Degree (Departmental form required; **Appendix 5a**)

For PhD students:

- Report of Doctoral Committee Composition
- Report of Approved Dissertation Project
- Doctoral Exam Report

General:

- Transfer Credit Recommendation
- Request Extension of Time
- Minor Declaration Form
- Request Leave of Absence
- Request Reinstatement
- Readmission Application
- Request to Teach Course Within Academic Program
- Parental Leave Application Form

Additional, Departmental forms (identified as **Appendix #** in this Handbook) and other materials can be found below. Questions about these forms and policies can be addressed to the Student Services Manager, Academic Advisor, and DGS, as appropriate.

## APPENDIX 3

### Guidelines and Principles for Graduate Student Teaching in Geography

This document borrows from Provost's guidelines, Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) documents, and Graduate Committee's GTA development document. It outlines general policies and recommendations for training; for expectations and responsibilities for both faculty and TA/TFs; and for supervision, evaluation, and recognition of TA/TFs.

#### General Policies

All students participating as TAs or Teaching Fellows (TFs) will be in good standing with the department and graduate school, be proficient in the English language, and be making satisfactory progress towards their degree. Student participation (and funding) as a TA or TF is a special opportunity and can be withdrawn with cause as the need arises. Participation as a TA is a service to the professor, the department, and university, as well as an opportunity for professional development for the student/TA. The Department should recognize this duality in course assignment, training, assessment, and recognition. Moreover, professors supervising TAs should participate in the professional development of students assigned as their TAs.

It is strongly recommended that all students participate as TAs at some point in their career since communication and teaching skills are essential to any field of endeavor. It is strongly recommended that all students intending on a college/university career participate in the extra training noted below even if they do not have the opportunity to participate as a Teaching Fellow.

#### Training Requirements

- (1) Common training is required for all departmental TAs prior to TA assignment. Those not initially in TA assignments may defer the training if desired. This training consists of: (a) CFE orientation (offered before fall and spring semesters), (b) Departmental orientation covering departmental technology such as projection technology, copiers, processing of scantrons, etc., (c) Departmental orientation covering departmental policies regarding the role of TAs and faculty, evaluation and recognition, etc., (d) Further, TAs are strongly encouraged to participate in the CFE's short seminars offered during the semester.
- (2) Focused extra training is required (in advance) for all Teaching Fellows (i.e., students with complete course responsibility).
  - (a) To be eligible for a teaching fellow assignment, students must:
    - (i) Request a course teaching assignment to the Graduate Committee who will make a recommendation to the departmental chair. There is no guarantee that the department will be able to honor the request given budget, course, and schedule restraints.
    - (ii) Have completed their PhD course work.
    - (iii) Making satisfactory progress towards the degree as indicated by the student's advisor and committee.
  - (b) Have completed a formal course on university teaching or a customized CTL course consultation or have evidence of appropriate teaching experience. Exceptions will be granted only with documented evidence of completion of a similar course elsewhere or equivalent experience.
  - (c) Participate in the Department's and the CTL's program of teaching evaluation.

#### Expectations and Responsibilities

- (1) Guidelines for selection of TAs include both graduate student qualifications (see above) and

faculty and departmental course needs. (a) Size of enrollment and/or special needs (e.g., for computer or other lab help). (b) Need/desire for TA help (carries with it a responsibility for TA mentoring).

- (2) The expectation is that TAs are 'professors in training' and their roles should reflect more than simply clerical or technical labor. Responsibilities for TAs may differ and should be progressive—according to experience and position. By accepting TA help, faculty are accepting responsibility in the TA's professional training as well. (a) 1st time TAs should have limited (but escalating) responsibility; progressing from only mentoring, clerical, or technical tasks to more responsible ones such as grading, presenting an occasional lecture (planned with help from the supervising faculty and/or [CFE](#)), helping prepare tests or web sites, etc. (b) More experienced TAs should be given more responsibility where possible (e.g., responsibility for creating exams (or parts of exams), lectures, assignments, web sites, etc.).
- (3) TAs are expected to reflect on their experience as a TA in each class (e.g., what they learned, what is needed to make the course function better, etc.) and communicate that to the supervising professor, the DGS, or Department Chair if appropriate.
- (4) There is an expectation that TAs and professors will discuss and agree upon responsibilities, duties, work-loads, and performance standards.
- (5) The TA work load is to average no more than 20 hours weekly. In some weeks this will be exceeded due to course requirements and others will require less.
- (6) There may be the need to resolve potential disputes between a TA and supervising professor. In these cases the TA or professor should initially discuss the problems together or with the DGS (or Associate Chair, if the DGS is not appropriate). If warranted, the issues will be escalated to the Department Chair for arbitration.
- (7) It is expected that potential exceptions may arise to any of these expectations and that some combination of the DGS, the TA, the supervising professor, and the department chair will pursue an appropriate remedy. In other words, expectations and responsibilities should be flexible.

### **Supervision, Evaluation, and Recognition**

- (1) There will be supervision and evaluation of all graduate students in teaching roles.
  - (a) Teaching Assistants
    - (i) Supervising faculty will observe and consult where appropriate and report the TA's overall performance in a brief note to the TA, Associate Chair and DGS. Graduate students are encouraged to use CFE teaching [resources](#) as well. (ii) Where appropriate, a standard departmental (qualitative) teaching evaluation survey (in addition to the usual quantitative course evaluation) will be administered to evaluate the TA's performance.
  - (b) Teaching Fellows
    - (i) A member of the departmental teaching committee will formally observe and evaluate at least one lecture and evaluate the course design, exams, etc. This teaching committee evaluator will create a written teaching performance comment/evaluation that will be given to the TF, the DGS, and department chair. (ii) A standard departmental (qualitative) teaching evaluation survey (in addition to the College's numerical course evaluation) will be administered to evaluate the TF's performance. (iii) Teaching Fellows will organize an evaluation of their teaching with the [CFE](#) including video-recording if appropriate.
- (2) Formal recognition will be encouraged for all TAs and TFs through annual graduate student teaching awards. Using formal evaluation and faculty observations, the departmental teaching committee (with help from supervising faculty) will also submit appropriate TAs and TFs to University-wide teaching prize competitions and [fellowships](#).

**APPENDIX 4**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL Department of Geography**  
**MASTER'S COMMITTEE COMPOSITION REPORT**

**Student's Name:**

**PID#:**

**Date:**

**Committee Chair: (Please print and Sign)**

**Committee Member 2: (Please print)**

**Committee Member 3: (Please print)**

*Committee Member 4: (Please print)*

**(Three members required, two must be regular members of the department.)**

**Signed**

**Director of Graduate Studies:**

**APPENDIX 5a**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**

**RECOMMENDATION TO BYPASS THE MASTER'S DEGREE**

Student's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

PID# \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Preliminary description of PhD dissertation project:

Speaking for the Committee, I recommend that this student bypass the Master's degree & pursue the doctoral degree.

Signed  
Committee Chair\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Under separate cover, Committee Chair should send a note to DGS explaining why the student has been recommended to bypass the MA degree and noting evidence of student preparedness and capabilities.**

APPENDIX 5b

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO PURSUE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION FOLLOWING  
COMPLETION OF M.A. (FOR MA/PHD STUDENTS)

Student's Name:

PID# -

Date:

Master's Degree to be awarded: May \_\_\_\_\_ August \_\_\_\_\_ December \_\_\_\_\_  
year year year

We **recommend** that this student continue beyond the Master's Degree and pursue completion of the doctoral degree in Geography at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Signed/date

Committee Chair/Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_

---

We do **not** recommend that this student continue beyond the Master's Degree to pursue completion of the doctoral degree in Geography at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Signed/date

Committee Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** Please indicate why the Committee *does* or does *not* recommend the student continue to pursue the doctoral degree in Geography at UNC-Chapel Hill following completion of the M.A. degree, using additional pages as needed.

## APPENDIX 6

### UNC-CHAPEL HILL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY ADMISSION PROCEDURES

The application and admission process has three major steps:

#### **(1) Initial Indication of Interest**

All prospective students are strongly encouraged to contact individual faculty members with whom they appear to share common interests and/or the Director of Graduate Studies prior to any formal application. It is the policy of the Department to admit only those students who have been 'sponsored' by a specific faculty member. This 'sponsor' undertakes to provide advice and guidance during the first year in residence. In many cases the initial sponsor becomes the formal Academic Advisor of the student, but students are not bound to the initial faculty member contacted. For those who have not yet fully developed specific interests, the Director of Graduate Studies may serve as the initial sponsor. Visits to campus are encouraged but not required; advance notice to the Director of Graduate Studies and other faculty is always appreciated. Visiting students are responsible for arranging meetings with suitable faculty and graduate students. Personal contacts can also be made with many faculty and students who attend the AAG national and Southeastern Division of the AAG each year.

#### **(2) Formal Application**

All prospective students must apply for admission to the Graduate School of the University of North Carolina. The Graduate School has responsibility for administering the admissions process, the Department being responsible for selecting the candidates to be admitted. The deadline for consideration for admission in the Department of Geography with Graduate School funding (i.e., to be eligible for competitive, departmentally-nominated Graduate School recruitment [fellowships](#)) is December 15<sup>th</sup> (for Fall admission). The deadline for consideration for admission into the Department of Geography with Department funding is February 1<sup>st</sup> (for Fall admission). The Department primarily accepts students who start with the Fall semester, but a Spring semester admission is possible under extenuating circumstances.

#### **(3) Evaluation and Admission**

The Graduate Committee of the Department of Geography is responsible for evaluating all applicants and recommending admission and funding decisions to the Graduate School. The Department is highly selective and students are admitted on merit and compatibility with faculty research interests. The Department seeks to admit high quality students from a diverse background whose general interests are aligned with those of one or more of the active Departmental faculty. Selection is made with the following criteria or considerations in mind: (1) Qualifications of the candidates, including (i) GRE scores; (ii) GPAs at previous schools; (iii) TOEFL scores for foreign candidates; (iv) stature of previous schools, programs, and majors; (v) letters of recommendation; (vi) additional relevant experience; and (vii) letter stating interest in the program. Note that this list does not imply any ranking of criteria; each component is given an approximately equal weight; (2) The match between prospective student and faculty interests, including the faculty members' current load of graduate students and research program; (3) Evidence of interaction between faculty members and students with common interests, especially for those already holding MA degrees; (4) Evidence of a research program or project which the student could become involved in, funding available now or in the immediate future, or of research currently being proposed; (5) Potential contributions to the Department; (6) How well applicants represent the diversity of North Carolina,

the United States, and the world. The number of students in residence is constrained by Graduate School policies, faculty load and availability of funding.

#### **(4) Orientation Activities**

All newly admitted students attend a New Graduate Student Orientation meeting, organized by the Director of Graduate Studies, held prior to classes to orient students to department policies and procedures. In addition, along with faculty and returning graduate students, incoming students attend the Departmental Welcome & Orientation which takes place immediately prior to the start of classes for the Fall Semester. In addition to covering a variety of necessary administrative issues, orientation provides an opportunity for interaction between old and new members of the Department. Faculty members have the opportunity to discuss their current research interests and projects, and to describe Departmental links with other units or organizations on campus and in the local area. In addition, faculty and students consider a variety of practical matters ranging from funding to use of the Departmental computer facilities. These meetings complement the orientation provided by the Graduate School, which concentrates on University-wide issues.



**APPENDIX 7**  
**Report of Graduate Student Progress & Scholarship**

Students must complete and return the following information as an email attachment to the DGS and Academic Advisor by **March 31** for each year enrolled in the Program. DGS will send a request for this information and reminder of the deadline each year at the start of the spring term.

**Student's Name:**

**Advisor's Name:**

**Members of Graduate Committee:**

**Date:**

**Evaluation & Comment:**

1. List all publications (including "in press" and "in review" submissions) for the past year (April 1 – March 31). Please use a regular citation style for publications.
2. List all professional meeting presentations (full citation of co-authors, title, organization, etc.) for the past year (April 1 – March 31).
3. List any additional professional meetings attended during this period, including location and dates.
4. List any awards, grants, or other honors (applied, received, pending).
5. Describe your anticipated research or course-related plans for the next year and your expected dates of completion.
6. Describe any departmental and program milestones met this year (see Graduate Handbook, Appendix 1) and/or plans for the coming year (e.g., doctoral comprehensive exams ).
7. Describe any teaching activities that you have been involved with and their general outcomes.
8. Describe any service or outreach activities that you have been involved with and their general outcomes.
9. Please provide other relevant information as appropriate.

**APPENDIX 8**  
**Faculty Report of Graduate Student Progress & Scholarship**

Please complete and return to DGS the following information by **April 10** each year for all graduate advisees. Graduate students that you supervise should have provided you a copy of their Annual Report for review by March 31. Please assess and comment on each student's progress in our graduate program. If you have not received the reports of your students, please contact them and request a copy. Please submit the material to DGS as an email attachment.

**Student's Name:**

**Advisor's Name:**

**Date:**

**Evaluation & Comment:**

1. Briefly describe and evaluate your student's participation and progress in course-work, milestones (e.g., comps, proposal), and research related activity over the past academic year (or earlier where applicable).
2. Comment on your student's TA, GRA, or other assignments/fellowships as appropriate.
3. Please provide and comment on any additional information relevant to the student's progress, promise, background, and accomplishments as a geographer and scholar.
4. What is your overall assessment of the student's progress and promise for scholarly excellence?
5. Other comments or information as appropriate; please feel free to express concerns or provide feedback regarding the student's graduate program, in general, or your experience with your student.

**APPENDIX 9**  
**GEOGRAPHY – GRADUATE INDEPENDENT STUDY**

GEOG900 001

**GEOGRAPHY – GRADUATE INDEPENDENT STUDY**

SEMESTER: FALL 201\_ OR SPRING 201\_

SUMMER I 201\_ OR SUMMER II 201\_

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Student PID \_\_\_\_\_

Student email \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty directing Independent Study \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Hours \_\_\_\_\_

Goal of Independent Study:

What processes will your independent study involve? (e.g., readings, regular meetings, etc.)

How will the Independent Study outcome be evaluated? (e.g., final paper, presentation, annotated bibliography, etc.)

**A One Page Syllabus is REQUIRED for all independent study projects\***

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_