

# CLARK UNIVERSITY

## GRADUATE SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY

### PH.D. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Effective August 2011

## Ph.D. Program Structure

<b>Program Structure</b> .....	4
<b>Residence Requirements</b> .....	4
<b>Course Requirements and Options</b> .....	5
First Year.....	6
Second Year.....	6
Third year.....	6
Fourth Year and beyond.....	6
Incompletes.....	6
<b>Assessing Satisfactory Progress</b> .....	7
<b>Progress to Degree Timeline (Figure: 1)</b> .....	7
First Year.....	7
Advisor (see also Appendix regarding advising).....	7
First-year review.....	8
Second Year.....	8
Second-year review.....	8
Third Year.....	9
Fourth Year.....	9
Progress beyond Fourth Year.....	9
<b>Monitoring Progress to Degree</b> .....	10
Faculty Meeting: Oversight.....	10
Progress to Degree Letters.....	10
Termination and Appeal.....	10
Skills Requirements.....	11
Professional Development.....	12
<b>PHD Committees</b> .....	12
Doctoral Examination Committee.....	12
Dissertation Research Proposal Committee.....	12
Dissertation Committee.....	12
Changes to committees.....	12
<b>Doctoral Examination</b> .....	13
Optional Written Component.....	14
<b>Grading Orals Exams</b> .....	14
Examples of Orals Fields.....	15
<b>Dissertation Research Proposal</b> .....	15

<b>Dissertation Defense and Presentation</b> .....	17
<b>Dissertation Types</b> .....	18
Dissertation Monograph.....	18
Three Article Dissertation.....	18
The Stand Alone Articles (SAA).....	19
Progress to Degree Timeline (figure 2: repeat).....	19
<b>Master of Arts (Pre-doctoral and Non-doctoral MA)</b> .....	19
Pre-doctoral.....	19
Non-Doctoral.....	20
<b>Appendix</b>	
Advising.....	21
Timetable: May Commencement and other degree conferring deadlines...	23

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The graduate curriculum is organized to give a broad view of the field of geography and its teaching, as well as specialized approaches to selected subfields. The subfields are organized in accordance with the research interests and teaching competencies of the faculty. These subfields include: Earth System Science, Geographic Information Science/Remote Sensing, Human-Environment, and Urban and Economic geography. Major cross-cutting areas of these that are Clark strengths include political ecology, regional/international development, and human dimensions of global environmental change. It is not uncommon for students to build research projects and committees that cross between subfields; these options are limited only by the general nature of the offerings and the interests and competencies of the faculty.

The School encourages study on the 'frontiers' of geography, study that links with work outside the discipline to tackle problems in an interdisciplinary manner and to create 'new geographies.' Such endeavors, however, should not lose sight of the traditions that mark the discipline and the fact that the degrees awarded certify substantial expertise in the discipline. Graduate studies in the School, therefore, should seek a balance between knowledge of the discipline, or several of its subfields, and knowledge specific to the major research problems of the student.

This document describes policies and requirements currently in effect in the Graduate School of Geography. The graduate program is reviewed on a regular basis and it is occasionally necessary to make changes to these program requirements. When these changes occur, students have the option of following the program requirements in effect at the time of matriculation into the program, or the new program structure.

The chair of the Graduate Studies Committee serves as the Graduate Advisor. The Graduate Advisor is appointed by the Director for a period of two academic years, with the possibility of renewal. The Graduate Advisor has the responsibility for supervising the passage of all graduate students through the Graduate School of Geography in a timely and orderly manner with the assistance of the Graduate Program Administrator. The Graduate Advisor is involved in all decisions regarding students' completion of program requirements, and is the person with whom issues relating to particular students and interpretations of the Program structure must first be raised. The Graduate Advisor meets with the Graduate Program Administrator and the Director regularly to discuss major pending decisions and the progress of the graduate student body as whole. Together, they assess progress to degree, but the Director retains final decisions pertaining to student funding.

## **RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS<sup>1</sup>**

**Full-Time Resident status** normally applies to students registered for three courses per semester. The three course load includes directed reading, directed research, and directed

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<sup>1</sup> Residency is a University term reflecting a student's full time status. It does NOT bear on where you live, or on international visa status. Non-resident students are not allowed to be a TA/RA.

writing courses as well as regularly scheduled courses. Students are required to be enrolled as full-time students taking either courses or directed readings (or some combination) up until the doctoral examinations and proposal are complete: ABD (All But Dissertation) stage.

Once a student has completed all requirements for the Ph.D. (skills, doctoral examinations, proposal, defense/display; and the residence period) except for the dissertation, the student is advanced to ABD status. The student is still full-time, taking three credits of directed study for field work and dissertation writing. The total time in residence, starting from matriculation, is normally five years. It shall not exceed six years, regardless of when ABD status is achieved. After six years, students must be considered non-resident and are subject to the University's non-resident fee.

**Non-Resident status** is accorded to students who have completed all of their course work, including field work, and have exhausted the five (or exceptionally six) year resident period. Non-Resident students are those who are not physically present at Clark except on an occasional basis, have only their dissertation to complete, and are only sporadically using Clark facilities (library, computer, etc.), although these facilities are fully available to them. However, they must still register for three non-resident credits to retain full-time student status and receive full tuition remission. Students must pay the University non-resident fee. Non-resident students are not allowed to be a TA/RA.

**Part-time:** Clark University does not allow part-time status for students receiving tuition remission.

**A Leave of Absence** may be granted with the approval of the Director and the Dean of the Graduate School for a designated period, not to exceed one year in total (as per University requirements), to students who can present a valid reason for temporary suspension of their graduate studies. Students on leave of absence are not eligible for loan deferments or any Clark benefits. This said, the GSG will consider individual circumstances. For instance, in cases of illness or family leave, the GSG will address each particular situation sensitively and may find solutions that do not involve formal leave of absence.

All students therefore have one of three statuses: full time, non-resident, or on an approved leave of absence. Otherwise, and in the absence of the student having formally consulted with their advisor, Director, and Graduate Advisor, the student is assumed to have withdrawn and must file for reinstatement. In order to recommence Graduate studies, reinstatement must be approved by the Director and the Dean of the Graduate School.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND OPTIONS**

To obtain a Ph.D. students are required to register for 8 semesters of courses (including directed readings, research, and thesis/dissertation work). All students, as indicated above, must register for three units per semester to maintain resident status and tuition stipend.

### **First year**

The first year of graduate study is designed to focus on seminars or other coursework to help students define their interests within the context of the Clark program, as well as professional development. The student will select courses in consultation with the formal first year graduate advisor. All entering students must complete Geog 368 (The Development of Western Geographic Thought) and Geog 318 (Explanation in Geography). In order to maintain satisfactory progress in the graduate program, by the end of the first academic year the student must obtain a minimum of 5 course units by August 1.

### **Second year**

The second year of study should emphasize in-depth work in the student's field of interest, formulation of possible doctoral exam topics, problem formation and research, and satisfying the research skills requirement (see below). Usually these goals are intricately linked. Course work should include seminars, directed readings, and directed research.

### **Third year**

By the end of third year of study, students should have completed the program requirements to be ABD, including the skills requirement; passed the doctoral examination; and defended a research proposal. Course work should deal with specific research topics and degree requirements not yet completed. The specific requirements and degree options are outlined on the following pages.

### **Fourth year and beyond**

Course work beyond ABD is 3 units per semester of directed study, usually under the supervision of the advisor(s), and in some cases also committee members. These units reflect continuing full-time "residency" status focusing on dissertation research and writing.

### **INCOMPLETES**

An "I" (Incomplete) grade must be agreed upon in a written contract signed by the student and the faculty member. Contract forms are available in the Graduate Program Assistant's office. The contract involves an agreement on the incomplete work to be performed and the date it is due. The contract form must be completed within two weeks of the last teaching day of the semester. (For more information on incompletes, see section on Assessing Satisfactory Progress.)

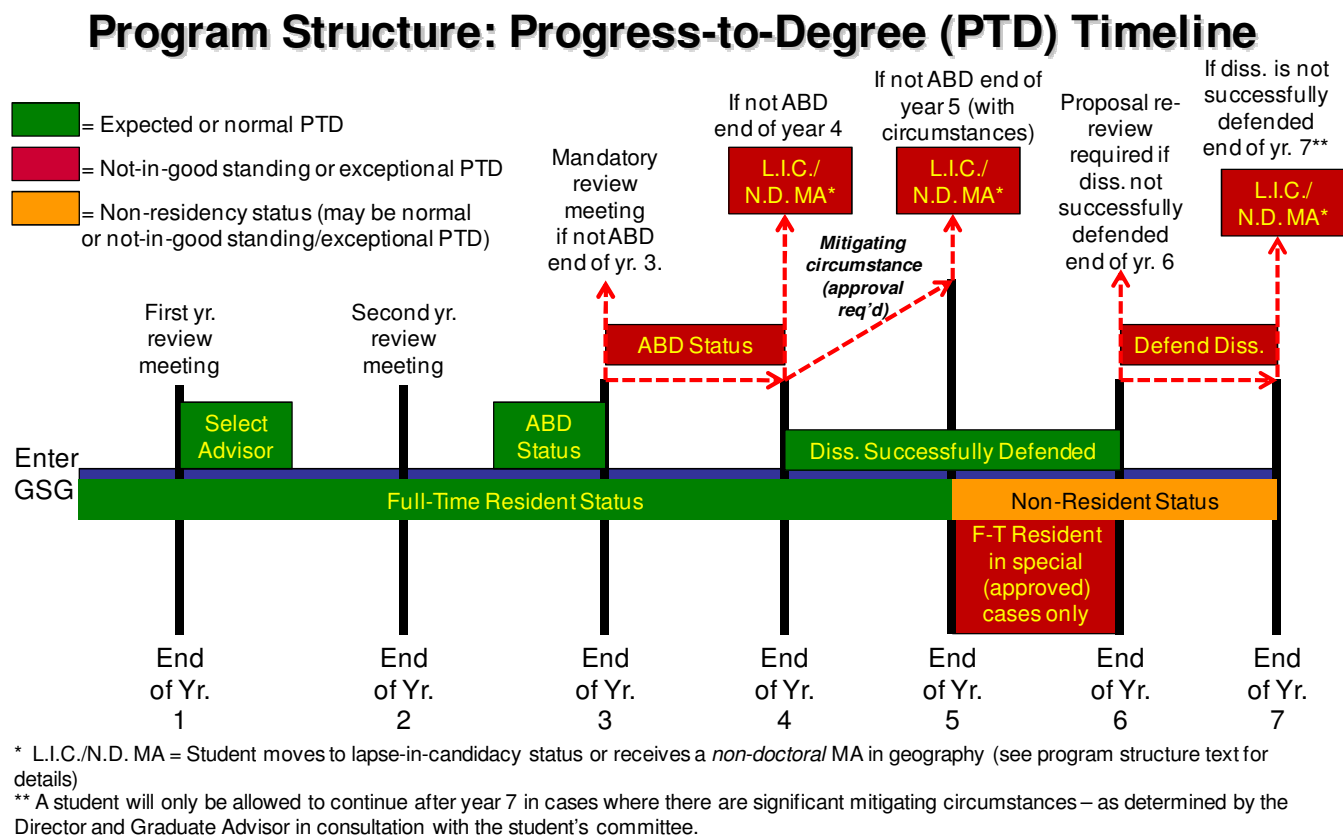
Any grade of "I" must be removed prior to the day on which grades are due in the semester of residence that follows the semester in which the incomplete was incurred. Failure to remove an incomplete by the specified date will result in an automatic grade of F, or in a leave of absence.\* This requirement applies to all graduate students presently in the graduate program and is not subject to the "grandfathering" clause.

\*The Registrar will notify the Graduate Program Administrator of any incompletes that have not been satisfied by the start of the next semester.

## ASSESSING SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

For a student to maintain satisfactory progress in the program, the student needs to complete three course units per semester and move through program milestones in a timely fashion (as discussed in the next section). In cases where a student has taken one or more incompletes, the work must be completed satisfactorily by the agreed-upon date. If they are not, students are no longer in good standing and may be asked to leave the program or take a leave of absence to complete the work. The goal is to attain six course units/year; anything less is an exception, not the rule. Exceptions must be approved by the Advisor and/or committee, Graduate Advisor, and the Director, in joint consultation. The approval is then given to the Graduate Program Administrator to update the department records and put in the student file.

**FIGURE 1: PROGRESS TO DEGREE TIMELINE**



### First year

As noted above, students take required courses during their first year, as well as elective seminars. They should also be deciding on an *advisor*.

### Advisor (see also Appendix regarding advising)

The Graduate Advisor serves as advisor to each student during the first year of residence. In the course of the first year, students are expected to identify and select an advisor to supervise their program of study. This advisor should be named by the end of the first year, if not before.

However, in some cases, students can opt to keep the Graduate Advisor through the third semester, if more time is needed to determine the new advisor.\* The faculty advisor meets (in person or via email) with the student at registration time during each subsequent semester to plan the student's courses/program of study for the following semester.

\*Advisor Declaration/Change form available in the Graduate Program Administrator's office.

### **First-year review:**

Immediately following the end of classes in the Spring semester, a formal review of the student's first-year work and discussion of his/her future program (including a decision about the new advisor) will be held by a three-member First Year Advisory Committee. The committee is composed of three faculty members, one of whom is either the Director or the Graduate Advisor, and the other two members are determined during consultation between the Graduate Advisor and the graduate student. If the student is ready to declare a new advisor at this time, that will be recorded on the form. Students should discuss this issue with the Grad Advisor before the meeting, if a new advisor has not already been selected.

About two weeks in advance of the First-Year Advisory Meeting the student should submit to each member of the committee a list of courses taken and TA/RA duties and a reflection on the experience of the first year. (A copy is also given to the Graduate Program Administrator for the department and student files). The student may opt as well to submit an example of work completed during the year (usually a review or research paper). The advisory meeting involves an assessment of progress made during the first year of study, and includes advising on the next year of study. In addition to its advisory role, the committee makes a recommendation to the Director and Graduate Advisor on the continuance of the student in the graduate program. A first year review form is filled out and signed by the committee and by the student; these forms are then given to the Graduate Program Administrator to place in the student's file.

### **Second Year**

By the end of the second year of study, students are strongly encouraged to: (1) fulfill their skills requirement; (2) identify a Ph.D. examination committee; (3) be preparing for their doctoral exams, possibly completing orals by the end of the second year; and, (4) begin dissertation proposal formulation (possibly defending the proposal in the second or early third year).

### **Second-year review:**

Every student will have a second-year review meeting with his or her committee. For students taking their Doctoral examination at the end of the fourth semester, second year review will take place at the end of the examination. For all other students, second year review will take place following the end of classes at the conclusion of the fourth semester, when the second-year review committee will normally be comprised of members of the student's Ph.D. examination committee.

Before this meeting, the student will submit a statement summarizing courses taken, TA/RA duties, proposed topics/fields for the Ph.D. examination (including preliminary outlines and reading lists for each topic), and progress to date.

The purpose of the second year review is similar to that of the first year review. Written statements of the meeting will be prepared by the committee and by the student; these statements will be reviewed by the Graduate Advisor and given to the Graduate Program Administrator to be placed in the student's file.

### **Third year**

The third year reflects progress from seminars to a more focused dissertation project. Students are expected to attain ABD status in the third year. If ABD is not attained by the end of this year, a third year review meeting with the student's committee is mandatory.

### **Fourth year**

Students are working on dissertation research and writing in the fourth year. Some students will be working to complete ABD requirements. If by the end of the fourth year, a student has not achieved ABD, he or she will proceed to a non-doctoral master's degree<sup>2</sup>, except in cases of significant mitigating circumstances, as determined by the student's committee in consultation with the Graduate Advisor and Director.

### **Progress beyond Fourth Year**

Following ABD status, students will work on dissertation research and writing. They will normally remain in residence until the end of Year 5, though their advisor may make the case for an additional year of residence reflecting the exceptional circumstances of the student's research progress (for instance, extended periods of field work). This extension of residency will be approved or not by the Graduate Advisor and Director in consultation with the student's committee.

Students will normally defend their dissertations during Year 5 or Year 6 of their degree. Students and/or advisors may request consultation meetings of the full dissertation committee for input and review of progress once each year after year four (more if the committee agrees such meetings are necessary). For students who, by the end of Year 7, have not completed and successfully defended their dissertation, their doctoral candidacy will lapse, at which point they will leave the program except in cases of significant mitigating circumstances as determined by the Graduate Advisor and Director in consultation with the student's advisor and committee. For reinstatement, students must make a formal petition, resubmit their dissertation proposal, and, if necessary, defend the proposal once again. The Graduate Advisor and Director will, in consultation with the student's advisor and committee, determine whether to accept the petition and whether a re-defense of the proposal is necessary. The Dean of the Graduate School makes the final determination for reinstatement. Once reinstated students must defend and submit final corrected copies of their dissertation on or before a date specified by the Graduate Advisor, Director, and the student's advisor (a time period that normally will not last more than a calendar year).

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<sup>2</sup> Please see page 19 for an explanation of the non-doctoral MA.

**All (first year, second year, possible third) review committee meetings occur during the examination and reading periods at the end of each semester.** Scheduling is carried out by the Graduate School of Geography through the Graduate Program Administrator. Students must ensure that their academic files contain the required information, including brief progress reports from the faculty on courses not yet completed. All pertinent reports are then given to the Graduate Program Administrator to place in student files.

## **MONITORING PROGRESS TO DEGREE**

### **Faculty Meeting: Oversight**

At the GSG's March faculty meeting, the Graduate Advisor, with the assistance of the Graduate Program Administrator, will present a progress report for all students in an executive session. This review assesses each student in relation to the recommended timeline and in terms of any problems, such as grades, incompletes, etc. This is in preparation for the first, second, and possible third year review meetings with students. The Graduate Program Administrator will contact faculty advisors and students as needed in advance of this meeting to obtain up-to-date information as to progress.

### **Progress to Degree Letters**

Subsequent to the faculty oversight meeting, the Graduate Advisor, Director, and Graduate Program Administrator send "progress to degree" letters to each student, their advisor(s) and GSG committee members of record informing them of their status, as determined from information available in and after the faculty oversight meeting, and of upcoming timeline benchmarks. These letters should help to set the agenda for the second and possible third year review meetings, which follow in May.

**A student who fails to make satisfactory progress based on the timeline** must meet with a committee consisting of the student's Advisor(s), any relevant (GSG) committee members (if the student has a committee), the Graduate Advisor, and the Director. Following the faculty's "oversight" meeting, it is the responsibility of the Graduate Advisor to ensure that this check-in meeting is held with the student. The committee meets with the student and makes a recommendation to the Director on the continuance of the student in the graduate program. The committee and/or the student may recommend a "grace period" during summer break or over a specified time-frame in which the student is given the opportunity (with or without a leave of absence) to meet the requirements of the program.

### **Withdrawal/Dismissal from the Program ("Termination")**<sup>3</sup>

One possible outcome of the above meeting is a recommendation that the student leave the program, or termination. Dismissal may include conferral of a Master's degree, pending satisfactory completion of work recommended by the committee and agreed by the student (such as a dissertation proposal or master's thesis). In a case of termination, the advisor/committee are not obligated to accept work for a MA, but it is possible with mutual consent. Appeals against the department's termination decision should be addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies,

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<sup>3</sup> "Termination" is the term used by the Graduate School for dismissal/withdrawal.

clearly stating the grounds for appeal. The Dean may choose to convene a subcommittee of the Graduate Board to consider the appeal. Minimum standards for retention of graduate appointments (i.e. Scholar, Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant) are set by the individual departments with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

### **Skills Requirement**

Each student is required to demonstrate proficiency in a number of skills relevant to geographic research. The Graduate School of Geography offers courses that will fulfill most skill requirements. Students can demonstrate proficiency in a skill by receiving a passing grade in the indicated course, or by taking an examination set by the graduate school. Each student is required to demonstrate proficiency in two of the following areas:

(1) Multivariate Statistics: satisfied by taking and passing Intermediate Quantitative methods in Geography (Geog. 347).

(2) Research design/research methods: satisfied by taking and passing Research Proposal Writing in Geography (Geog. 314).

(3) Geographic Information Systems: satisfied by taking and passing Intro to Geographic Info Systems (Geog. 390).

(4) Remote Sensing: satisfied by taking and passing Intro to Remote Sensing (Geog. 383).

(5) Qualitative Research Methods, Skills and Applications: satisfied by taking, and passing, (Geog 310).

(6) A foreign language: satisfied by completing a second-year, second-semester college level course or by the independent, examined assessment of a Clark University of other faculty member approved by the Graduate Advisor.

(7) Other courses approved by the student's faculty advisor and the Graduate Advisor.

In the case of students entering the GSG with a Master's degree, one of the two required courses may be satisfied with a course taken for the Master's. In such cases, approval must be granted by the Graduate Advisor, in consultation with faculty who teach equivalent GSG courses.

Students must fulfill the skills requirement by the end of the sixth semester. Students should notify their advisor when they have completed their skills requirement. The advisor will then, in consultation with the Director, have the Graduate Program Administrator place a memo in the student's file signifying completion of the requirement. The dissertation research proposal will not be processed or approved by the Graduate School until the skills requirements are met.

## **Professional Development**

In order to provide for professional development opportunities, the Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with CUGS, offers periodic professional development workshops (PDWs). These Professional Development Workshops (PDWs) are planned jointly by GSG faculty (via the Grad Advisor and GSC) and CUGS on topics such as grant preparation, teaching skills/techniques, job interviewing, presenting at AAG, etc. Graduate students are expected to take advantage of these opportunities during their first few years in residence. First year students will be expected to attend one PDW in the first semester as part of the orientation to the program, organized and led by the Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Program Administrator.

## **PHD COMMITTEES:**

At various stages in the program, there are different types of committees that students assemble to assist them in their progress to degree. The first and second year review committees represent faculty who have some knowledge of the progress of the student in those years, through courses or TA/RAships. There are three different types of PhD committees, which may or may not be comprised of the same set of faculty. The following describes each committee type and purpose.

The **Doctoral Examination Committee** is composed of a minimum of four faculty members, at least three of whom are from the Graduate School of Geography. The chairperson of the committee ((one of) the student's advisor(s)) must be a regular appointment of the Graduate School of Geography (tenure track as defined in the faculty handbook). Committee members must be approved by the Graduate Advisor at least three months prior to the Doctoral Examination. (In the case of students working with the Graduate Advisor, the Director makes those approvals normally vested in the Graduate Advisor, and vice versa).

The **Dissertation Research Proposal Committee** consists of a minimum of four faculty members (two readers and two reviewers) at least three of whom are full-time faculty members of the Graduate School of Geography, and at least one of whom is an external (non-GSG) member. The chair of the committee is always a full-time member of the Graduate School of Geography. The Graduate Advisor must approve all dissertation research proposal committees.

The **Dissertation Committee** consists of at least four faculty members, three of whom are full-time members of the Graduate School of Geography, and at least one of whom is external. The chair of the committee is always a full-time member of the Graduate School of Geography. The Graduate Advisor must approve all dissertation committees. The chair of the committee may, after approval from the Graduate Advisor, and in consultation with the graduate student, change the make-up of the dissertation committee.

## **Changes to the committee**

Once a student has created a PhD committee, that committee is usually the same for the doctoral examination, proposal defense, and dissertation defense. From time to time, however, students may decide to change the composition of their PhD committees. It is acceptable and permissible for students to change committee membership as long as the committee conforms to the above requirements. It is incumbent on faculty to recognize that changes may occur, and

ought to be supported; it is also incumbent on students to inform faculty in a timely manner of committee changes, and to recognize that faculty participation on PhD committees is a time commitment that faculty take seriously. When changes occur, it may be a disappointment on both sides, but it is a professional decision and process. To that end, students are required to complete the change of committee form so that faculty members are always informed of their responsibilities as committee members (form available in the Graduate Program Administrator's office or on the department webpage).

### **DOCTORAL EXAMINATION**

The doctoral exam assesses the competency of graduate students in one major and two minor fields (see appendix for examples of orals fields--these fields must be approved by the chairperson of the doctoral examination committee). Competency is defined as an understanding of the substantive content and range of theoretical approaches within each subfield. Students must be able to critique alternative research traditions and defend the theoretical frameworks they adopt. For the exam in the major field the student will be expected to have an in-depth knowledge of the entire field; in the field selected for the first minor, the student will be expected to have mastered a survey of the field. The appended list of subfields is intended as a guide to the appropriate breadth of subfields for the major and the first minor. The topic of the second minor will be a more narrowly defined field; the student will be expected to have an in-depth knowledge of the second minor. The dissertation proposal is not an eligible field for the Ph.D. exam, although the research context from which the proposal is drawn can be used as a field.

At least three months prior to the doctoral examination, each student is required to submit to the doctoral examination committee (with a copy to the Director) a topical outline (about one page) and reading list (4-8 pages) for each of the proposed fields for the Ph.D. examination. These items must be submitted during the regular semester. A copy of the approved reading lists should be signed (approval by email is fine) by the committee and submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant to be kept in the student's file. Notice of the oral examination is formally sent (email) to faculty two weeks before the scheduled examination date, upon approval of the chairperson of the orals committee.

The Doctoral Examination takes place sometime between the fourth semester in residence and the end of the sixth semester. The dissertation proposal may be defended before or after the doctoral examination, both shall be done by the end of the sixth semester.

The doctoral exam takes place during, or immediately following the end of classes in each semester. The doctoral examination serves as the second-year review for students taking it at the end of the fourth semester. All other students are subject to second-year review as stated previously.

At least three members of the committee must be physically present to constitute a doctoral examination. In cases of sabbatical or other exigency, faculty may be virtually present in cases approved in advance by the Graduate Advisor and Director. At the beginning of the doctoral examination, the graduate student may ask and answer a question of her/his own choosing – however this is normally a question dealing with the overall structure of the main field. This answer should last between 10 and 15 minutes – but should not take longer. It may be

accompanied by limited visual materials (power point, overhead, Xerox paper copies of diagrams) but once the initial answer is completed, the use of visual materials should be discontinued.” (By “limited” is meant no more than three slides/diagrams/tables). The oral portion of the exam on the major will last approximately one and a half hours, and the oral portion of each minor exam will be about 45 minutes. (Additional time should be scheduled for committee deliberation and feedback to the student at the conclusion of this time period.)

Graduate students should not provide food or drink to the doctoral examination room, but may bring their own personal water, coffee etc.

### **Optional written component:**

At the student's discretion and in consultation with the advisor, the oral exam can have a written component, on any or all of the three fields, to focus on content and mastery of the material. This is in addition to, rather than instead of, the oral examination, but the oral exam will be shorter: each portion with a written component may be half the length of an orals-only doctoral exam. Members of the committee shall prepare written questions for each field that the student takes as a written exam and send them to the Graduate Program Administrator. At the beginning of a pre-determined eight-hour period (plus an hour for lunch) for each field, the Graduate Program Administrator will communicate to the student a selection of original questions posed by the committee that the student completes in a “take-home” setting. The answers shall not exceed 2500 words per field, or the eight-hour period per field. The scope and number of questions shall be limited by this constraint. However, students for whom English is not their native tongue will have more time, specifics determined mutually by the student and committee. The written component shall be completed two weeks before the scheduled oral exam, over a period of up to four weeks

Each student is required to inform the Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Program Administrator of the chosen exam format upon submission of the orals reading lists, or, at least one month before the exam date.

### **Grading Orals Exams:**

Each written component will be graded Pass, Conditional Pass, and Unsatisfactory. Pass and Conditional Pass allow the student to proceed to the oral doctoral examination. An unsatisfactory grade on any written portion of the exam will require *an additional written exam for that field only* prior to the oral examination.

Grades for the Ph.D. oral examination are: Pass, Conditional Pass, and Unsatisfactory. In the case of a grade of conditional or unsatisfactory, all or part of the examination may be re-taken one time. At the committee's discretion, all or part of any re-taken examination may be in writing. A second grade of unsatisfactory results in failing the Ph.D. examination and dismissal from the Ph.D. program. Students failing the Ph.D. examination are eligible for a non-doctoral Master's degree on completion of a thesis, the content and structure of which are to be defined by the committee and approved by the Director and Graduate Advisor.

### **Examples of Orals Fields \***

1. Agricultural Geography
2. Biogeography
3. Cultural and Political Ecology
4. Climate Change
5. Economic Geography
6. Environmental Management, Hazards and vulnerability
7. Feminist Geography
8. GIS and Remote Sensing
9. Globalization
10. Human-Environment
11. Land Use/Change
12. Nature and Society
13. Political Ecology
14. Political Economy
15. Social and Political theory
16. Suburbanization
17. Sustainability
18. Urban Geography
19. Third World Development

\* This list of fields is to be used as a guide to defining major and first minor orals exam topics; it is based on current faculty interests. Students may select alternative major and minor topics (see for example the AAG list of topical fields). While external committee members are not required for the orals, topics outside of the expertise of GSG faculty may require external committee members be involved in development of orals lists. Students should rely on the advice of their advisors in making this determination.

### **DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

A formal research proposal for dissertation work, which normally should not exceed a maximum of 10-15 pages (single-spaced), must be completed and approved by the student's dissertation committee. Appendices and references do count toward the page limit.

(a) The research proposal must be defended and submitted by the end of year three and at the absolute latest end of year four.

(b) At least one formal meeting (a research proposal defense) must be held with at least three members of the committee in which a draft proposal is submitted and discussed. The proposed defense can be held during the months of June, July and August only by unanimous consent of the committee and Director and Graduate Advisor.

(c) The dissertation research proposal should be a concise, focused document. One good model is the NSF dissertation grant proposal document which focuses on a concise statement of theory,

original contribution of the research, previous findings, methodology and the research plan. This will also facilitate the development of grant proposals to NSF and other groups.

**Title page** -- Proposed title of dissertation; name of student; name and signature of 1st and 2nd readers, and the names of two reviewers; date of submission; a 250 word abstract typed (single spaced) stating concisely the nature of the problem to be pursued, objectives of the study, and data and methods to be employed.

**Introduction and Justification** -- A specific statement of the problem as a researchable issue, including its relationship to past and present research.

**Literature Review** -- Discussion of the pertinent literature and placing the proposal in context.

**Procedure** -- Discussion of the research objectives and design, and the data to be employed.

**Timetable** -- A rough timetable for the research, analysis, and writing phases.

**Bibliography** -- Works which most clearly relate to the study as sources of theory, data, or methodology should be cited. While the bibliography should reflect a thorough awareness of the literature, it need not be all-inclusive.

A final research proposal must be signed by all committee members. With approval of the first reader, the student submits one clean electronic copy of the proposal to the Graduate Administrator, and the proposal abstract for distribution to the faculty who then forwards the abstracts to the faculty and places proposal copies on review in Geography office for a two-week review period. At the end of that period, if no objections have been raised to the first reader, formal approval is granted by the Director. If objections are raised, the committee and the student will assess the case and determine what alterations in the proposal, if any, are needed.

Once approved, the proposal has a three-year validity period. If the dissertation is not completed by the end of three years after approval of the dissertation research proposal, the research proposal –or other plan for completion— must be submitted for re-approval. One prerequisite for such re-approval is provision for one academic semester's physical presence in Clark during the year following re-approval to work on the dissertation. (Twelve weeks during the summer is considered the equivalent of an academic year semester for this purpose, with the proviso that a faculty member be in residence at Clark during the summer and express a willingness to supervise.)

All students should complete their doctoral examination and proposal defense by the end of the sixth semester of study, or arrangements may be made for a non-doctoral Masters degree. If the Director, Graduate Advisor, and the student's doctoral committee agree that there are mitigating circumstances, an extra year of time to reach ABD status may be granted.

For students not defending their dissertations by the end of six years after entering the Graduate School of Geography: a (physical, not email) meeting is called of the dissertation committee with the graduate student in attendance and also the Director and the Graduate

Advisor at which a plan for completion of the dissertation must be presented by the student and approved by the committee. The purpose of the 6-year meeting is to establish a strategic plan, based on commitments on both sides (faculty and student), with firm deadlines for the completion of the remaining work. This process may include re-proposing and re-defending the proposal at the committee's discretion. Following this meeting the graduate student is given a maximum of one additional year to complete and defend the dissertation. Should the dissertation not be defended after one year (i.e. 7 years after entering the program), the student's candidacy will lapse, i.e., no student will be in the program for more than seven years, combining residency and non-residency, though excluding leaves of absence. Any return to the program must follow the University's formal procedures for reinstatement.

## **DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND PRESENTATION**

The dissertation involves a process of interaction with and approval by the dissertation committee (see PHD COMMITTEES).

(a) A complete draft of the thesis (an electronic version of all chapters, figures, tables and bibliography) is defended at a working session of the dissertation committee. This "defensible draft" should have already been subjected to extensive criticism and re-working. With the approval of the first reader, the student forwards copies of an abstract of the dissertation to the Graduate Advisor for distribution to the faculty at least two weeks before the working session. The student must provide a copy of the defensible draft to all members of the dissertation committee at least two weeks before the working session. Also, in preparation for the working session, one copy of the defensible draft must be placed for faculty review in the geography office for a two-week period. The defensible draft put on display in the department must be complete in terms of including all chapters and bibliography.

(b) A final version incorporating changes suggested at the draft stage is approved by the dissertation committee and a letter of approval forwarded to the Director who places the final draft of the dissertation on display for two weeks. **See appendix 'Timetable for May Commencement' for all relevant deadlines.**

(d) The working session may take place via alternate media, such as video conferencing, Skype or e-mail discussion.

(e) The dissertation is then formally accepted by the dissertation committee and the Director. An electronic copy of the dissertation then goes to the GSG Graduate Program Administrator who will help the student with printing, obtaining signatures and the number of desired copies delivered as follows:

- one unbound copy to the Graduate School of Geography
- one unbound copy to the University Format Advisor (Graduate School Assistant)
- number of personal copies requested by the student. This number includes complimentary copies to committee members.

It should be noted that the student is fully responsible for all costs connected with the dissertation. (cost information is obtained from the Graduate Program Administrator).

## **DISSERTATION TYPES**

Two different types of dissertation may be prepared and defended: the Dissertation monograph (DM) or the Three Article Dissertation (TAD).

### **I. Dissertation Monograph**

A. The DM constitutes the “classical” dissertation form in which the topic of the dissertation is treated in monograph form, composed of a series of chapters that lay out the research problem or synthesis theme, review the relevant literature, detail the data or evidence and the mode of analysis employed, and provide conclusion and significance statements as well as a bibliography. Appendixes, prefaces, and acknowledgements may be appropriate.

B. The dissertation is completed when approved by dissertation committee.

### **II. Three Article Dissertation**

A. The TAD constitutes a *dissertation volume* composed of (i) an introductory chapter addressing the general problem in which the three articles are encapsulated, (ii) at least three stand alone articles (SAA) related to a coherent research problem, and (iii) a summary/conclusion that sets the overall contribution of the research in context.

i. The introductory chapter (i) establishes the broader problem or topic of study and how the three SAAs fit within it, and (ii) provides the relevant literature review and discussion of methods employed in the dissertation research but not found in any of the three articles.

ii. The SAAs constitute original research, review, or conceptual-philosophical contributions to geographical or geographical-related scholarship.

iii. The concluding chapter summarizes-reviews the findings of the SAAs and specifies the contributions that each article and the three-article set make to science/knowledge more broadly, the specific dissertation problem/topic, and the discipline awarding the dissertation degree.

B. The entire dissertation is initially and primarily written by the doctoral candidate regardless of the subsequent revisions and authorship of the articles submitted for publication.

C. The introductory and concluding chapters must follow the style of *Annals AAG* and contain individual bibliographies. The “article” chapters must follow the style of the journal to which it will be submitted for consideration of publication. The formatting of dissertation must be consistent with the dissertation submission rules of Clark University.

D. Each chapter of the dissertation must contain the requisite tables, graphics, and bibliography, regardless of redundancy that may appear owing to the 3-article format.

E. The dissertation may have prefaces/acknowledgements, appendixes, and other complementary sections as needed.

F. The dissertation is completed when approved by the dissertation committee. It is understood that this approval asserts that the three articles are of sufficient quality that they are ready for submission to the identified journals.

### **The Stand Alone Articles (SAA)**

A. Each SAA is a complete and publishable research contribution or review unto itself following the content and length of a “research article” as defined by major journals (i.e., those journals reviewed by the Social Science Citation Index, the Science Citation Index or the Arts and Humanities Citation Index).

B. None of the three articles can be published in any other dissertation. The articles may have been published or in press previous to dissertation if they are a substantive part of the research proposal defended and approved by the School.

C. Each article must be submitted for consideration of publication (either previous or subsequent to the completion of the dissertation) to a major journal consistent with the research discipline, subfield, or interdisciplinary area of the dissertation author.

D. Authorship of the articles in their submitted form must include the dissertation author as the lead author of any multiple authored submissions. In the dissertation, each SAA will carry a footnote describing if that contribution is to be submitted as single or multiple authored.

## **MASTER OF ARTS**

Only students seeking a doctoral degree are admitted to the Graduate School of Geography. However, two types of M.A. degrees are available: Pre-doctoral and non-doctoral (or terminal). Figure 2 (see below), the progress-to-degree timeline, highlights when the non-doctoral MA would be a relevant option for students.

## **PRE-DOCTORAL M.A.**

An M.A. degree can be awarded to doctoral candidates who do not already have a master’s in geography after fulfilling the following requirements:

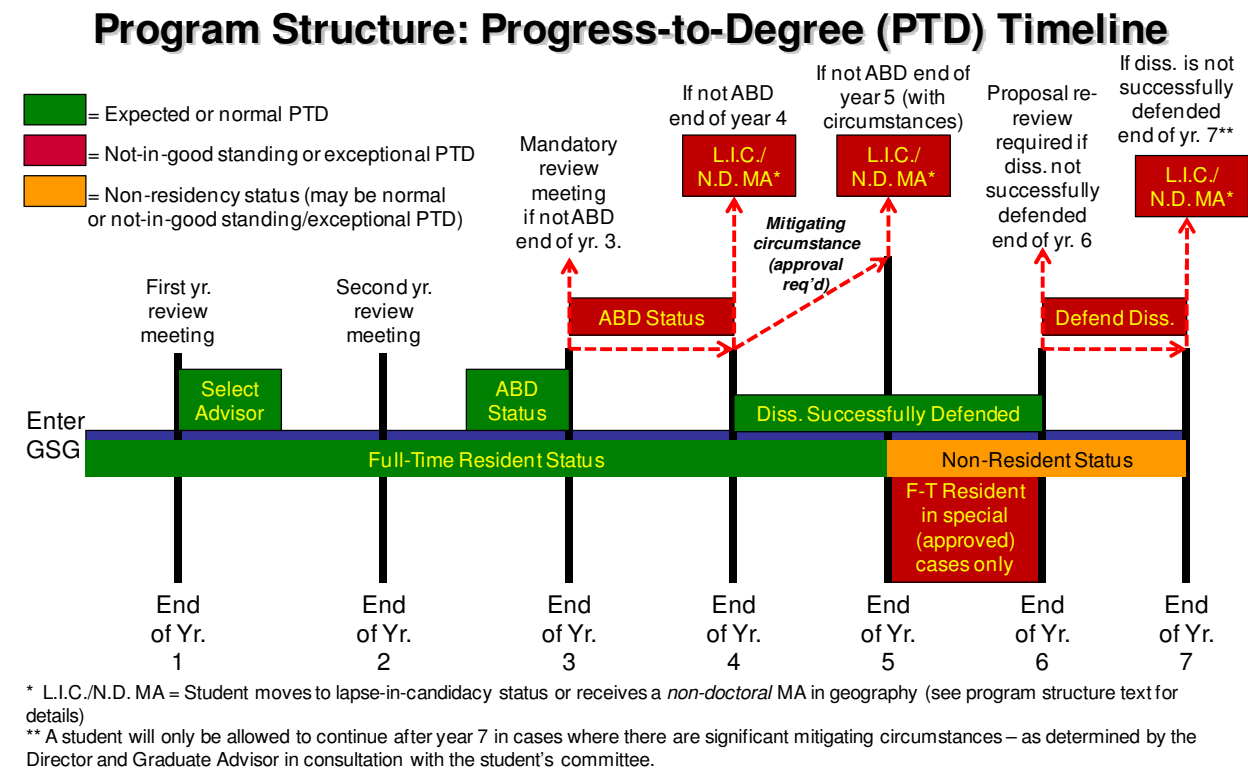
- (a) completion of 8 semesters of courses;
- (b) completion of required course work;
- (c) completion of doctoral examination; and
- (d) approval of the dissertation proposal.

A student opting for the pre-doctoral MA should request it at the time of achieving ABD status. Requests made more than one semester after achieving ABD status are likely not to be granted.

## NON-DOCTORAL (Terminal<sup>4</sup>) MA

Normally no later than at the end of the first semester of the second year of residence, after a review process, students may opt or may be advised to shift to a non-doctoral M.A. degree, under which circumstances they would normally substitute thesis-writing credits for formal course credits. This thesis is a research paper or short article (15-30 pages), demonstrating an ability to define a problem, as well as serving as evidence of research competence.

**FIGURE 2: PROGRESS-TO-DEGREE TIMELINE**



After approval by a committee consisting of the major advisor and two other faculty of the student's choosing, one electronic copy of the final draft with a letter by the major advisor noting committee approval will be delivered to the Geography office. The Director will then announce to the faculty that the draft is available for examination.

Faculty comments will be reviewed by the major advisor and any changes approved by the advisor. The thesis is accepted by the advisor and the committee. Following acceptance, two unbound copies of the final draft are delivered to the GSG Graduate Program Administrator and one printer-ready (unbound) copy to the University Format Advisor (Graduate School Assistant).

<sup>4</sup> The University terms the MA that is not en-route to the PhD, a “terminal” MA. It means simply that the student leaves the program with the MA rather than continuing in the program to PhD candidacy.

(The GSG Graduate Program Administrator will facilitate delivery of the unbound copy to the Graduate School).

Students completing the Non Doctoral MA must re-apply should they subsequently wish to enter the Ph.D. program.

Non-doctoral MAs may also be granted when students who have not made satisfactory progress leave the program. Conditions under which this may occur, and pertaining to the granting of such degrees, are outlined in the earlier sections on Progress-to-Degree and Doctoral Examinations.

## **APPENDIX TO THE Ph.D. PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

### **ADVISING**

The Ph.D. Program Structure document outlines the course of graduate studies from a student's entry into the program until the completion of the program. It spells out the formal requirements that have to be met by a student in order to obtain a doctorate in Geography from Clark University. One final aspect of graduate studies – advising-- however, needs further clarification beyond its outline in the program structure. The following interpretation, composed by CUGS, amended and approved by the faculty, is therefore appended.

Faculty and graduate students (subsequently referred to as 'we') acknowledge that the advising relationship between the two is a crucial aspect of the experience of graduate studies as a whole. We believe that this relationship is entirely mutual yet difficult to define and prescribe. We nevertheless deem it possible and recommendable to agree on a number of basic principles pertaining to the advisor-advisee relationship in order to ensure the success of this relationship and the advisee's path toward the Ph.D.

By advisor we generally mean all members of a graduate student's first-year review, second-year review, oral examination, proposal defense, and/or dissertation committee(s) and on the broader level, the Director of the Graduate School and the Head of the Graduate Studies Committee. These committees may, but need not, consist of the same faculty members. Usually, the committee consists of a main advisor and several additional advisors.

The main advisor plays a significantly more important role in the student's graduate school career. So while all of the below is applicable to all advisor-advisee interactions, the relationship between the main advisor and the student is more invested, more committed, requires more time and more frequent contact, and a higher level of intensity in the cooperation.

By advisee, we mean any graduate student formally admitted to the Ph.D. program.

By advising we mean the exchange from advisor to advisee in which the advisor offers timely advice, feedback, and opinions to the advisee regarding any aspect pertinent to the successful completion of the requirements toward the Ph.D., and the advisee's launching of a career in his or her envisioned field.

The nature of this exchange, and the aspects considered pertinent to successful completion of the program -- while guided by the advisor's academic expertise and experience with advising -- are determined in mutual agreement between advisor and advisee in order to best meet the specific needs of the advisee.

We agree to the following basic principles underlying the advisor-advisee relationship:

1. The **advisee/advisor relationship is a relationship based on mutual consent**, subject to approval by the School's director. Each faculty member and student should respect each other's autonomy in working with advisors and advisees of their choice.

2. The most **important aspect of the advisor-advisee relationship is mutual respect**; by the graduate student for the faculty's many other duties and commitments to other students, the School, the University, and outside the University, and by the faculty for the student's need for advising, and his or her other duties and pressures from other classes, departmental and outside commitments.

3. From this mutual respect for each other follows that expectations by one of the other must be matched by a commitment to honor each other's constraints and abilities. Specifically:

#### Advisor responsibilities

- Committee members, especially main advisors and second readers, **take on a serious commitment** to work with a student through the completion of a given phase of the Ph.D. process. Reasonable time should be given to advisees to carefully prepare for the completion of each one of the phases. Advisors should **work congenially and effectively with the advisee's other committee members** with the advisee's best interest in mind.
- Advisors should be **accessible**, i.e. advisees need to feel that they can make appointments with their advisors, that these appointments will be kept to the best of an advisor's ability, and that advisees, especially commuters, are informed as early as possible if cancellation of an appointment is unavoidable.
- Advisors should **make their general availability known** to the advisee (office hours, additional times, "good" and "bad" days, phone numbers, etc.)
- Advisors should be **responsive** to advisees' initiation of meetings, the issues and concerns brought up by the advisee, and the advisee's specific needs. They should act as a sounding board, and give as specific feedback as possible in as timely a fashion as possible. Advisors should **grant the advisee focused attention** during the meeting.
- Advisors should **make their expectations** of the student **known explicitly**. They should also give the student an idea about when s/he can expect a turn-around of submitted work. Turn-around work times ought to be reasonable in light of the type of work submitted.
- Advisors should be **aware that different students have different needs** in terms of

frequency, amount of time, and content of advising; different capabilities and working habits. This acceptance needs to be balanced with **concrete help** to improve the capabilities and habits as needed.

- Advisors should **encourage advisees to collaborate with others** and to develop **contacts outside the** Graduate School of Geography. They should advise students on how to **build networks** and to develop the kind of professionalism that will be needed later in our academic careers.
- Advisors should be **supportive of the advisee's initiative to define topics**, attend conferences, etc., that are in the student's best interest.

#### Advisee responsibilities

- Advisees should **not expect one advisor to meet all their** advising needs. The advisee should strive to choose the members of his or her committee such that most if not all of his/her needs are met within the faculty pool of the advisee's committee(s). Having solicited advice, advisees should conscientiously attempt to implement those measures mutually agreed upon.
- Advisees should **seek out their advisors, initiate meetings**, keep appointments, and inform their advisors as early as possible if the appointment cannot be kept.
- Advisees should **be punctual** for appointments, and **respect the time constraints of the advisor**.
- Advisees should recognize the advisor's time as valuable and thus **come well prepared** into the meeting. This means to have prepared the issues to be discussed and the questions to be asked.
- Advisees should be clear about **making their needs known**; they should give the advisor a clear idea of when they will hand in required information, what external deadlines they must meet, and with what problems they most need assistance.
- Advisees ought to **assess their own needs, capabilities, and progress as honestly as possible** in order to ask for, and obtain, the most appropriate advising.
- Advisees should **initiate contacts**, or respond openly to the opportunity to **develop outside contacts**, and actively seek to establish and maintain support and information networks.
- Advisees should **initiate the search for funding, internships, conferences** to attend, and research to explore.

#### Timetable to 'May Commencement' and other relevant deadlines:\*

**\*Precise dates will change each year depending on date for Board of Trustees meetings. These dates are set by the Graduate School:**

**February 1:** Final date for submitting defensible draft to members of the dissertation committee and one copy of the abstract to the Graduate Advisor.

- February 15:** Final date for one copy of the defensible drafts to be placed for faculty review in the geography office.
- March 1:** Final date for working sessions – all working sessions must take place on, or before, this date.
- April 1:** Presentation quality copy of the dissertation, together with two official title pages, an academic history and an abstract must be delivered to the University format advisor (via the graduate office) – note that “presentation quality” means the final copy ready to be bound.
- May 20:** Degree conferred - Commencement

Deadlines for the two other possible dates for receiving a PhD are as follows:

- August 1:** Final date for submitting defensible draft to members of the dissertation committee and one copy of the abstract to the Graduate Advisor.
- August 15:** Final date for one copy of the defensible drafts to be placed for faculty review in the geography office.
- September 1:** Final date for working sessions – all working sessions must take place on, or before, this date.
- September 30:** Presentation quality copy of the dissertation, together with two official title pages, an academic history and an abstract must be delivered to the University format advisor (via the graduate office) – note that “presentation quality” means the final copy ready to be bound.
- October 22:** Degree conferred
- November 17:** Final date for submitting copies of defensible drafts to members of the dissertation committee and copies of the abstract to the Graduate Advisor.
- December 2:** Final date for one copy of the defensible drafts to be placed for faculty review in the geography office.
- December 16:** Final date for working sessions – all working sessions must take place on, or before, this date.
- January 17:** Presentation quality copy of the dissertation, together with two official title pages, an academic history and an abstract must be delivered to the University Format Advisor (via the graduate office) – note that “presentation quality” means the final copy ready to be bound.
- February 4:** Degree conferred