

Clark University

Graduate School of Geography



Doctoral Program

Program Structure and Handbook



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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 Associate Director. The Associate Director is appointed by the Director for a period of two academic years, with the possibility of renewal. The Associate Director 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 Program Administrator. The Associate Director 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 Associate Director meets with the 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 REQUIREMENTS¹

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 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, meaning the All But Dissertation (ABD)

¹ 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.

status.

Once a student has completed all requirements for the PhD (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. Non-Resident 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, and time on leave does not count towards progress to degree. GSG makes every effort to consider individual circumstances (see "mitigating circumstances" under "Assessing Satisfactory Progress".)

All students therefore have one of three statuses: full time, non-resident, or on an approved leave of absence. Otherwise, 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 PhD students are required to register for 8 semesters of courses (including directed readings, research, and thesis/dissertation work). All graduate students, as indicated above and per Clark's requirements, 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 300-level 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, a.k.a. Associate Director. All entering students must complete GEOG 368 (The Development of Western Geographic Thought), GEOG 318 (Explanation in Geography),

and GEOG 388 (Current Research in Geography – related to the Colloquium Speaker Series, 1 credit for the academic year (0.5 credit per semester))². Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to take two seminars or other 300-level coursework (not directed study) each semester. 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 six course credits by August 1, in addition to the GEOG 338 course unit.

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 with the PhD committee's final proposal approval on file by May 15 of this third year. Course work should deal with specific research topics, proposal writing (GEOG 385), 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 three units per semester of research and dissertation writing credits (GEOG 317 and GEOG 394), as relevant, 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 through the Registrar'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 results in an automatic grade of F. The F can be converted to a passing grade upon satisfactory completion of the work as judged by the faculty

² In cases where the colloquium course conflicts with a seminar a first year wishes to take, student should make arrangements with both professors so that the student may attend colloquia on the days affected. If both professors agree, this arrangement can be made and a note put in the student's file that the colloquium requirement for the affected semester was nonetheless satisfied.

member, and subject to approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. If a student attains a formal leave of absence, then the F must be converted to a passing grade before returning to the program. All Fs must be converted to passing grades in order for the student to participate in the doctoral examination, proposal defense, or dissertation defense.³ This requirement applies to all graduate students presently in the graduate program and is not subject to the "grandfathering" clause.

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, Associate Director, and the Director, in joint consultation. The approval is then given to the Program Administrator to update the department records and put in the student file.

Mitigating Circumstances

The GSG takes individual circumstances into account in assessing progress. While we strive to maintain the same standards for all students, we recognize students have different circumstances. In cases of illness or family leave, for example, the GSG will address each particular situation sensitively and may find solutions that do not involve a formal leave of absence. The impacts of sabbaticals are often uneven but can delay student progress, and we take such situations into account in our annual reviews of progress. (See Appendix A for advisor-advisee responsibilities regarding sabbaticals.)

³ The Registrar will notify the Program Administrator of any incompletes that have not been satisfied by the start of the next semester.

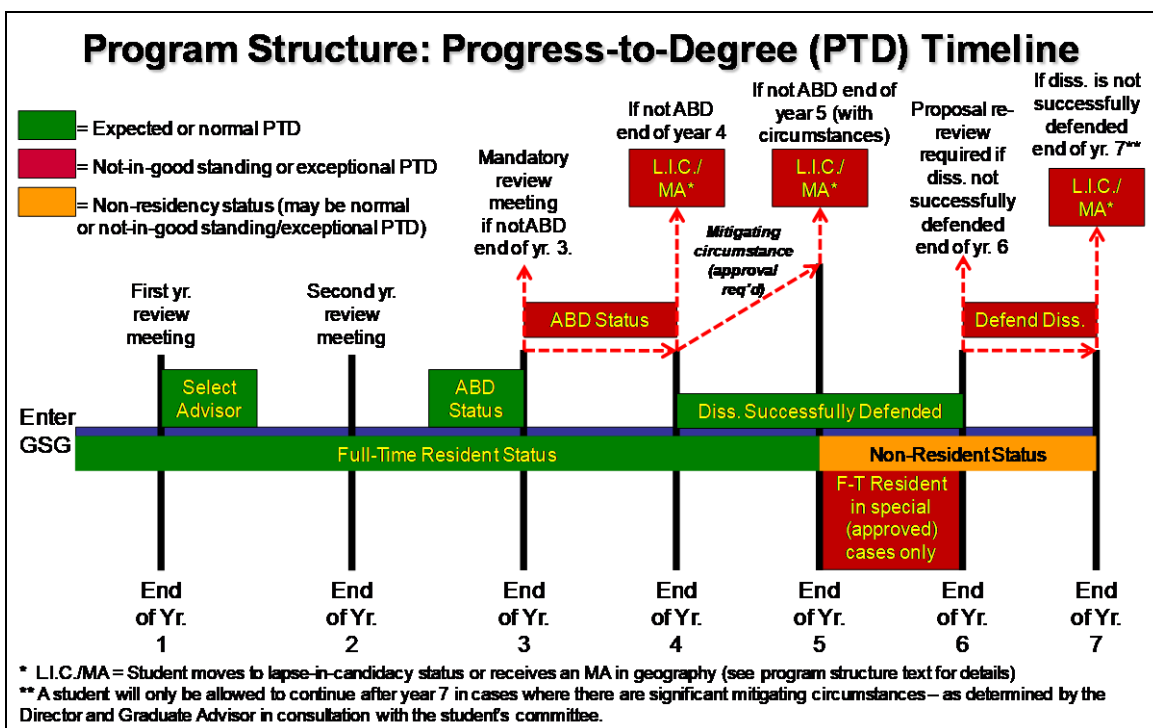


Figure 1. Progress to Degree Timeline.

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 Associate Director 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 Associate Director through the third semester, if more time is needed to determine the new advisor⁴. 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.

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 their 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 Associate Director, and the other two members are determined during consultation between the Associate Director 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

⁴ Advisor Declaration/Change form available in the Program Administrator's office.

Associate Director 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 Program Administrator for the department and student files). 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 Associate Director 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 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 PhD 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 PhD examination committee.

Before this meeting, the student will submit a statement summarizing courses taken, TA/RA duties, proposed topics/fields for the PhD 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 Associate Director and given to the 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. ABD status requires that the coursework including skills, oral examination, and proposal defense are complete. Proposals are not complete until they are approved with any required revisions post-defense and the relevant signed paperwork is on file. In order to have the proposal completed and approved by the end of the third year, it is important to defend the proposal about 45 days before the end of the term (usually about April 1 of the spring semester). If ABD is not attained by the end of this year, a third year review meeting with the student's committee is mandatory. Continuing

RA/TA funding beyond year three cannot be assured until ABD status is achieved⁵.

Fourth year

Students are working on dissertation research and writing in the fourth year designated with credits in GEOG 317 (research) and GEOG 394 (dissertation writing). Some students will be working to complete ABD requirements. If by the end of the fourth year, a student has not achieved ABD, they will proceed to a non-doctoral master's degree⁶, except in cases of significant mitigating circumstances, as determined by the student's committee in consultation with the Associate Director 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 Associate Director 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 Associate Director 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 Associate Director 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 Associate Director, Director, and the student's advisor (a time period that normally will not last more than a calendar year).

All (first year, second year, possible third) review committee meetings occur during the reading periods at the end of each spring semester. Scheduling is carried out by the Graduate School of Geography through the 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 Program Administrator to place in student files.

⁵ Please see PTD timeline on page 7.

⁶ Please see page 21 for an explanation of the non-doctoral MA.

MONITORING PROGRESS TO DEGREE

Faculty Oversight

At the GSG's March faculty meeting, the Associate Director, with the assistance of the 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 Program Administrator will contact faculty advisors and students as needed in advance of this meeting to obtain up-to-date information as to progress.

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 Associate Director, and the Director. Following the faculty's "oversight" meeting, it is the responsibility of the Associate Director 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.

Progress to Degree Letters (PTD)

Subsequent to the faculty oversight meeting, the Associate Director, Director, and 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.

Withdrawal/Dismissal from the Program ("Termination")⁷

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, 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

⁷ "Termination" is the term used by the Graduate School for dismissal/withdrawal.

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 Science: satisfied by taking and passing Intro to Geographic Info Science (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 or other faculty member approved by the Associate Director.
7. Other courses approved by the student's advisor and the Associate Director.

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 Associate Director, 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 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 and CUGS on topics such as grant preparation, teaching skills/techniques, job interviewing, presenting at AAG, etc. First year students must attend the PDW that is the orientation to the program at the beginning of the first year, organized and led by the Associate Director and the Program Administrator. Graduate students must participate in at least three PDWs by the end of year 2. At least two of the PDWs must be led by faculty members. Other PDWs may be led by peers.

Additionally, the department highly encourages students to serve at least one semester as a TA while in residence, or as an instructor post-ABD. Teaching experience is an important part of the PhD training. We make every effort to assign TA positions where possible, or to give instructor opportunities to students who have completed Clark's teaching certification requirement. Other teaching opportunities also come available from time to time in the area,

such as at Worcester State and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

PHD COMMITTEES⁸

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/RAs. 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 Associate Director normally approves all committees. If the Associate Director is serving on any of the three committees below, the Director makes committee approvals normally vested in the Associate Director (and vice versa).

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 Associate Director at least two months prior to the Doctoral Examination.

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, is the first reader, and is the main advisor. The Associate Director 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 Associate Director must approve all dissertation committees. The chair of the committee may, after approval from the Associate Director, 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,

⁸ Faculty who are adjunct in the GSG may be considered either an internal (GSG faculty) member of any committee, or an external member, depending on the student's preference. Adjunct GSG faculty may not serve as Chair or Co-Chair of a PhD committee.

students are required to complete a Change of Committee form so that faculty members are always informed of their responsibilities as committee members.

Convening Committees

The doctoral exam, proposal defense and dissertation defense require in person in the room at least: the student, the chair of the committee and two additional committee members who are from the Graduate School of Geography. If the fourth and any more committee members are not available in person, then they may interact via electronic media. If there are co-chairs, then at least one of the co-chairs must be present in the room.

Any deviation from the procedure for the three milestones must be approved by both the Associate Director and the Director before the event. Two types of deviations may be considered by the Associate Director and the Director as described below.

1. In the case of an unanticipated emergency, such as dangerous weather conditions, injury, sickness or immigration complications, deviations are at the discretion of the Associate Director and the Director. Defense via video conference is an option in cases of such emergencies; other options might be considered. The Director must report any such situations concerning immigration denial to the department.

2. For anticipated absences, such as international sabbaticals, deviation from these procedures must be approved in writing when the milestone is scheduled, or earlier, such as at the time of sabbatical application. This type should be invoked only when no alternatives are available and an undue delay in progress to degree would be incurred. When faculty members apply for sabbaticals, and their applications are considered by the Director, the potential consequences to their students should be considered.

Guidelines for Faculty

Applications for sabbaticals must include plans concerning the professor's doctoral students, especially concerning the three milestones of: doctoral exam, proposal defense and dissertation defense. Professors must plan concerning presence on campus for such milestones. Chairs of students' milestones must plan to be on campus for the milestones.

Guidelines for External Committee Members

External committee members serving on a proposal defense, doctoral examination, or dissertation committee are expected to have a PhD. In cases where a student is seeking an external committee member without a PhD, the student/advisor must bring the case to the Associate Director and/or Director for consideration.

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 PhD exam, although the research context from which the proposal is drawn can be used as a field.

At least two months prior to the doctoral examination, each student is required to submit to the doctoral examination committee a topical outline (about one page) and reading list (4-8 pages) for each of the proposed fields for the doctoral 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 Program Administrator to be kept in the student's file. Announcement of the doctoral examination is sent via email as a GSG Memo to faculty and all PhD students 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 doctoral exam takes place during the semester (i.e., from the first day of classes through to the end of the examination period). In cases where the student wishes to schedule a milestone outside of the semester, prior approval must be given by the committee and the Associate Director and/or Director. 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.

The dissertation proposal may be defended before or after the doctoral examination, both shall be done by the end of the sixth semester.

At the beginning of the doctoral examination, the graduate student may ask and answer a question of their 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 (PowerPoint, printed copies of diagrams, use of a dry-erase board/chalkboard) but once the initial answer is completed, the use of visual materials should be discontinued (*typically 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, with additional time at the end for committee deliberation and feedback to the student** This typically results in a total of a three-hour time block scheduled for the exam.

Students may bring water/coffee, etc. if needed, but should plan to not leave the room for the entirety of the exam/until the committee is ready to deliberate. During deliberation, the student will leave the room until they are called back for the outcome and feedback from the committee. After all discussions end, the committee and student should complete a Record of Examination form (provided ahead of the exam by the Program Administrator), sign where necessary, and submit the form to the Program Administrator to keep on file.

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 Program Administrator. At the beginning of a pre-determined **nine-hour period** (including 1 hour for lunch, meaning 8 hours of allotted exam time) for each field, the 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. 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. Whether the student takes a written component does not influence the questions that the committee can ask during the oral component.

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

Grading the Doctoral Examination

Written component: each written component will be graded as one of the following: Pass, Conditional Pass, or Unsatisfactory. Pass and Conditional Pass results will 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.

Oral examination: Grades for the oral examination are: Pass, Conditional Pass, or 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 PhD examination and dismissal from the PhD program.** Any student who receives a failing grade will however become 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 Associate Director.

Examples of Orals Fields⁹

- Agricultural Geography
- Biogeography
- Cultural and Political Ecology

⁹ 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.

- Climate Change
- Economic Geography
- Environmental Management, Hazards and vulnerability
- Feminist Geography
- GIS and Remote Sensing
- Globalization
- Human-Environment
- Land Use/Change
- Nature and Society
- Political Ecology
- Political Economy
- Social and Political theory
- Suburbanization
- Sustainability
- Urban Geography
- Third World Development

DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The doctoral dissertation research proposal defense takes place during the semester. In cases where the student wishes to schedule a milestone outside of the semester, prior approval must be given by the committee and the Associate Director and/or Director. 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.

1. The research proposal must be defended and final with revisions submitted by the end of year three (at the absolute latest end of year four), unless approved by the Committee, Assoc. Director, and Director (see "mitigating circumstances"). Any student who is not ABD by the end of year three is no longer in good standing and may face loss of stipend until ABD status is achieved.
2. Final proposal drafts must be approved by the student's advisor and submitted to all members of the dissertation committee **no later than two weeks before the scheduled date of the proposal defense**. An abstract of the proposal must be approved by the advisor and submitted to the Program Administrator at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the proposal defense. This abstract will be circulated to all faculty members along with the GSG Memo announcing the defense date.
3. The proposed defense can be held any time during the academic year (barring school vacation/university holiday). However, the proposal defense should not be held so late in the academic year that revisions will inevitably require oversight of the advisor and/or committee members during the summer months, particularly in cases where a student's timely Progress to Degree hinges upon proposal approval. Defenses may only be held during the months of June, July, and August if unanimous consent of the committee and

Director and Associate Director is given.

- a. The proposal defense is typically scheduled for a total of two hours, allowing time for the student to present their proposal to their committee and allow time for discussion, decision, and feedback. The student typically prepares a PowerPoint presentation, however this may be subject to the advisor's preferences for the proposal defense format.
4. 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 approved by all committee members. With approval of the first reader, the student submits one clean electronic copy of the proposal to the Program Administrator, and the proposal abstract for distribution to the faculty who then forwards the abstracts to the faculty and places the proposal in the 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 advisor and committee. 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 dissertation¹⁰.

All students should complete their doctoral examination and proposal defense by the end of the sixth semester of study (traditionally the end of the third year), or arrangements

¹⁰ 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.

may be made for a non-doctoral Master's degree. If the Director, Associate Director, and the student's doctoral committee agree that there are mitigating circumstances, an extra period of time to reach ABD status may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

For students who do not defend their dissertations by the end of year six: a (physical, not email) meeting is called of the dissertation committee with the graduate student in attendance and also the Director and the Associate Director at which a plan for completion of the dissertation must be presented by the student and approved by the committee. The purpose of the six-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. seven 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 committee¹¹.

1. 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 Program Administrator 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.
2. A final version incorporating changes suggested at the draft stage is approved by the dissertation committee and then placed on display for two weeks. See appendix 'Timetable for May Commencement' for all relevant deadlines.
3. The dissertation is then formally accepted by the dissertation committee and the Director. An electronic copy of the dissertation then goes to the GSG Program Administrator who will help the student with printing, obtaining signatures and the number of desired copies delivered as follows:
 - a. One bound copy to the Graduate School of Geography
 - b. One electronic copy to the Graduate School
 - c. Any number of personal copies requested by the student. This number may

¹¹ Please see *PHD COMMITTEES* section on pages 12-13.

include copies for the student's committee members¹².

DISSERTATION TYPES

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

Dissertation Monograph (DM)

1. 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.
2. The dissertation is completed when approved by dissertation committee.

Three-Article Dissertation (TAD)

1. 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.
 - a. 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.
 - b. The SAAs constitute original research, review, or conceptual-philosophical contributions to geographical or geographical-related scholarship.
 - c. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The dissertation may have prefaces/acknowledgements, appendixes, and other

¹² The student is fully responsible for all costs connected with the dissertation (except for the cost of binding for the departmental copy), which can be obtained from the Program Administrator.

complementary sections as needed.

6. 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)

1. 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).
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 (en-route to PhD) 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 MA (En-route to PhD)

An MA degree in Geography can be awarded to doctoral candidates who do not already have a master’s degree in geography (MA or MS) after fulfilling the following requirements:

1. Completion of required course work (GEOG 368, 338, 318, and two skills courses);
2. Completion of the doctoral examination; and
3. Approval of the dissertation proposal.

A student opting for the pre-doctoral MA must request it at the time of achieving ABD status.

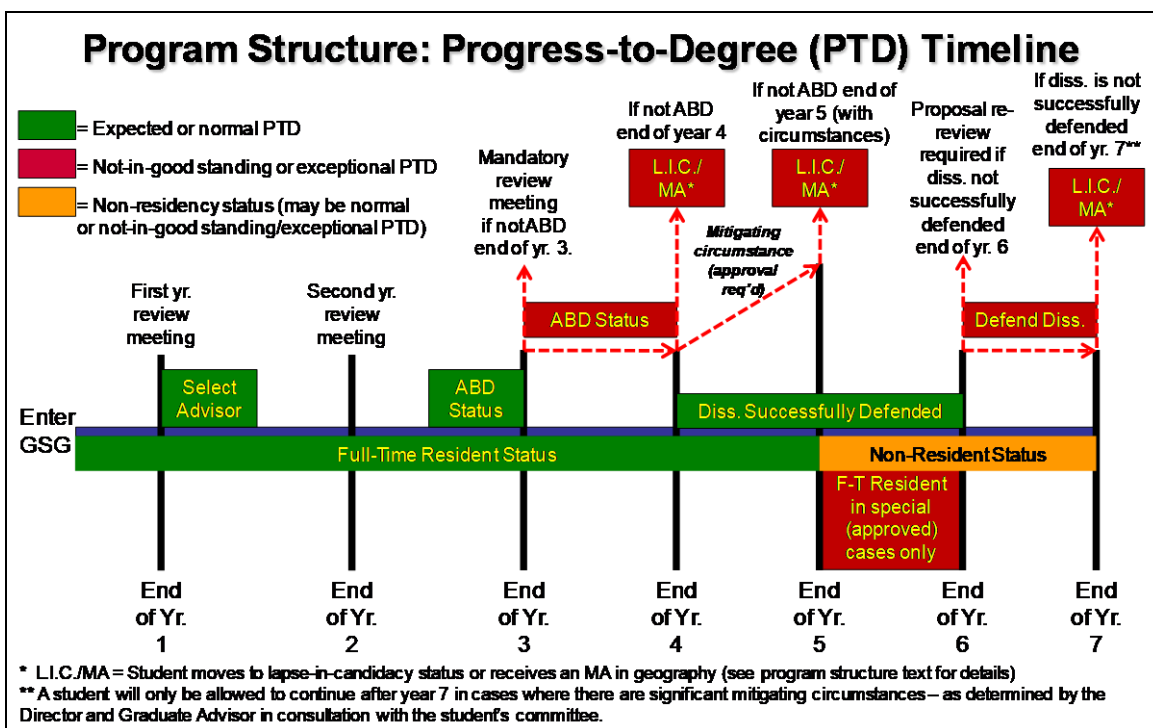


Figure 2. Progress to Degree Timeline.

Non-Doctoral (terminal¹³) 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 MA 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.

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 main advisor noting committee approval will be delivered to the Geography office. The Program Administrator will then announce to the faculty that the draft is available for review.

Faculty comments will be reviewed by the main 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 should be delivered to the GSG Program Administrator and one electronic copy to Graduate School. Students completing the Non-Doctoral MA must re-apply should they subsequently wish to re-enter the PhD program.

Non-doctoral MA degrees 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.

¹³ 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 degree in Geography, rather than continuing in the program to PhD candidacy.

STIPEND/FUNDING ALLOCATION PRINCIPLES

Each student admitted into the GSG doctoral program is guaranteed eight semesters of funding with eligibility for a fifth year of funding. There are four main principles associated with this funding commitment:

1. The eight-semester funding commitment is contingent upon each student's progress through the program, their status as a resident student, and the availability of funds in the department.
2. Students who receive external fellowships may defer their departmental support (in consultation with the Director, Associate Director, and their advisor) provided they are in residence in the program and are in good standing (as measured by our progress-to-degree (PTD) expectations, detailed on page 7). All students, regardless of whether they have external or internal sources for stipend support, are expected to be active participants in, and contributors to, the GSG community during their first two years in the program (at a minimum). During their first two years, students will be either TAs, RAs or in possession of a fellowship.
3. Students who do not have external fellowships can defer one semester of GSG stipend support provide they provide adequate up-front notice and receive approval from their Advisor, the Associate Director, and the GSG Director.

APPENDICES TO THE PhD PROGRAM STRUCTURE

APPENDIX A: ADVISING

The PhD 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 PhD

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 PhD 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 PhD, 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 (the department) 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 **take on a serious commitment** to work with a student through the completion of a given phase of the PhD 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.)
- **Sabbaticals** have a particular, unique impact on advisor-advisee communication and contact, and especially can negatively affect student's progress to degree. Advisors should develop a plan before their sabbaticals to ensure timely progress and means of

communication with their students while on leave.

- 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 they can expect a turn-around of submitted work. Turnaround 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 their 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.
- **Sabbaticals** have a particular, unique impact on advisor-advisee communication and contact, and especially can negatively affect student's progress to degree. Advisees should develop a plan with their advisors before sabbaticals to ensure timely progress and means of communication during these leaves.
- 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.

APPENDIX B: TIMETABLE TO COMMENCEMENT AND OTHER RELEVANT DEADLINES¹⁴:

These dates are set by the Graduate School:

May Degree/Commencement

January 26-February 20: APPLICATION FOR DEGREE must be filled out and submitted online (exact dates may vary year to year – details are circulated by the Registrar’s Office each semester).

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

February 15: Final date for one copy of the defensible drafts to be placed for faculty review in the geography office. (Display copy two weeks prior to defense date)

March 1: Final date for working sessions/defenses – all working sessions/defenses must take place on, or before, this date.

April 1: Presentation quality copy of the dissertation¹⁵, including preliminary pages with one official title page, an academic history and an abstract (properly formatted in accordance with University guidelines) must be submitted to the Graduate School for final approval via ProQuest ETD, as well as submitted to the advisor/s and the Program Administrator, for degree completion.

May 22: Degree conferred – Commencement
(Date changes yearly, usually the third Sunday in May)

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

August Degree

*****Summer milestones are contingent upon committee approval*****

May 22-June 21: APPLICATION FOR DEGREE must be filled out and submitted online (exact dates may vary year to year – details are circulated by the Registrar’s Office each semester).

June 1: Final date for submitting defensible draft to members of the dissertation committee and one copy of the abstract to the Program Administrator.

June 15: Final date for one copy of the defensible drafts to be placed for faculty review in the geography office. (Display copy, two weeks prior to the defense date).

July 1: Final date for working sessions/defenses – all working sessions/defenses must take place on, or before, this date.

August 1: Presentation quality copy of the dissertation, including preliminary pages with one official title page, an academic history and an abstract (properly formatted in accordance with University guidelines) must be submitted to the Graduate School for final approval via ProQuest

¹⁴ Precise dates will change each year depending on date for Board of Trustees meetings.

¹⁵ Note that “presentation quality” means the final copy ready to be printed and bound.

ETD, as well as submitted to the advisor/s and the Program Administrator, for degree completion.

August 30/31: Degree conferred.

December Degree

September 8 – October 3: APPLICATION FOR DEGREE must be filled out and submitted online (exact dates may vary year to year – details are circulated by the Registrar’s Office each semester).

September 15: Final date for submitting copies of defensible drafts to members of the dissertation committee and copies of the abstract to the Program Administrator.

October 15: Final date for one copy of the defensible drafts to be placed for faculty review in the geography office. (Display copy, two weeks prior to the defense date).

November 1: Final date for working sessions/defenses – all working sessions/defenses must take place on, or before, this date.

December 1: Presentation quality copy of the dissertation¹⁶, including preliminary pages with one official title page, an academic history and an abstract (properly formatted in accordance with University guidelines) must be submitted to the Graduate School for final approval via ProQuest ETD, as well as submitted to the advisor/s and the Program Administrator, for degree completion.

December 30/31: Degree conferred.

¹⁶ Note that “presentation quality” means the final copy ready to be printed and bound.