



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Graduate Student Handbook

M.A., M.Sc., and Ph.D. in Geography

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University of Saskatchewan, Department of Geography and Planning
Graduate Student Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance to graduate students, faculty, and staff relating to policies and procedures for graduate programs in geography. Every effort has been made to ensure that departmental policies and procedures meet minimum standards established by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS). In some cases Departmental policies exceed those of the College. In the event that there is conflict between procedures described here and the policies and procedures of the CGPS, those of the CGPS supersede those listed in this handbook.

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Section 1: Getting Started and Useful Links

The website of the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Saskatchewan is www.artsandscience.usask.ca/geography.

Potential applicants should refer to the website of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, (www.usask.ca/cgps) for regulations governing graduate programs, for details of graduate student fees and expenses; and for general information on studying at the [University of Saskatchewan](#) in [Saskatoon](#). This handbook aims to provide additional information on those aspects of graduate studies that are specific to the Department of Geography and Planning.

USEFUL LINKS FOR NEW STUDENTS

For more information on policies, forms, and student life at the U of S, and in Saskatoon, visit the helpful links provided below:

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
www.usask.ca/cgps

Disability Student Services
<https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/disability-services-for-students.php>

International Student Office website:
<http://students.usask.ca/international>

U of S Student Services website, Information for New Students:
<http://students.usask.ca/new>

University Residence Information and Applications:
<http://livewithus.usask.ca>

How do I get more information?

This handbook is intended to answer most of the basic questions that you may have, however it is recommended that you contact a faculty member directly, whose work is most similar to your own interests. Please include a brief summary of your interests and academic history, and if you are unsure as to whom you should contact, the Graduate Secretary would be happy to direct you to specific faculty members:

Ms. Phyllis Baynes, Graduate Secretary, Department of Geography and Planning
University of Saskatchewan, Room 125, 117 Science Place
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5C8 Canada
Telephone: (306) 966-5654
Fax: (306) 966-5680
Email: geography.planning@usask.ca

When do I have to apply?

The application deadline for September admission is **February 1st** each year, but it is a good idea to apply as early as possible, to ensure that your letters of recommendation and official transcripts arrive on time. Many prospective students contact a potential supervisor(s) in advance to discuss their interests.

How do I apply?

- i) **Apply Online:** Apply and submit all documents online for your application to graduate studies at the University of Saskatchewan. You can find the link on the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website: www.usask.ca/cgps
- ii) **Application Fee:** You must pay a non-refundable application fee of \$90.00 CDN. See the CGPS website for [how to pay](#).
- iii) **Transcripts:** Transcripts are now part of the online application. You must upload transcripts from your previous university(ies). If your academic records are in a language other than English, you must submit official literal English translations of all records.
- iv) **Letters of Recommendation:** Letters of recommendation should be from three referees who can report on your academic ability and qualification to pursue the program for which you are applying. These letters are usually provided from faculty who have taught or supervised you in the past. The letter of recommendation is now part of the online application. When you submit your application and enter the email addresses of your referees they will receive an automatic email. This email will include a link for them to follow to submit their letter electronically.
- v) **Statement of research interest (also known as a Statement/Letter of Intent):** With your application you are required to submit a statement of your research interests - it should be one to two pages in length. The statement of your research interests may include your preference of supervisor and potential members of an advisory committee. This document is uploaded during the submission of your application online.
- vi) **Language Proficiency:** Applicants from universities where English is not the primary language of instruction must provide proof that they have sufficient knowledge of oral and written English to successfully pursue graduate-level study at the University of Saskatchewan. This form can be uploaded online.

These are the minimum English language proficiency requirements for admission that are set by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for the most common test types.

Please check their website: [English Proficiency Requirements](#)

Section 2: Administrative Guidelines

2.1 M.A. AND M.Sc. DEGREE PROGRAMS

2.1.1 *Program of Studies*

The M.A. or M.Sc. programs involve both coursework and the preparation of a thesis. The courses are intended to provide the student with a general background in the research methods of geography, and to develop an area of specialization. The thesis presents an opportunity for the student to undertake independent research. For your interest, a list of previous theses completed by graduate students can be found online at

www.artsandscience.usask.ca/geography/graduates/recently-defended-thesis.php and a listing of current students and their projects underway is available online at
www.artsandscience.usask.ca/geography/graduates/current-grad-students.php

The thesis research and the selection of courses are done under the direction of an advisory committee. An appropriate supervisor must be available before a student will be recommended by the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) for admission to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (see section 2.4 for more information on the GAC). Faculty serving as graduate student supervisors must be members of the Department of Geography and Planning and of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Adjunct and Associate faculty of the Department of Geography and Planning are normally restricted to serving as co-supervisors with a regular faculty member.

The supervisor, in consultation with the student, invites others to serve on the advisory committee. The advisory committee has the primary responsibility for directing and evaluating the student's graduate study. The advisory committee recommends a Program of Studies for the graduate student, and may recommend revisions to that program. A majority of the members of the advisory committee must approve all recommendations with regard to the student's program.

The supervisor is responsible for calling meetings of the advisory committee. Keeping of minutes of the meetings, and distributing those minutes to the student and advisory committee members is undertaken by the advisory committee chair with the support of the graduate secretary. Advisory committee meetings are held at least once per year and as required to evaluate and assist the student in their program of study.

2.1.2 *The Graduate Advisory Committee: Function and Structure*

The graduate student advisory committee is to assist the student in completing the program requirements. Members are brought together for their substantive expertise in the research area.

Master's committees are composed of a minimum of 3 members:

- 1 Head of Department or Designate who acts as Chair (non-voting except to break a tie);
- 1 Research supervisor;
- 1 or more additional members.

2.1.3 The Role of the Chair of Advisory Committees

Purpose: The role of the Chair of graduate student Advisory Committees is to maintain the fairness and integrity of the process for both students and faculty.

Duties: The Chair is required to attend all meetings and to work with the advisor to complete minutes of each meeting, record votes, and file the records with the graduate secretary. During all meetings (including examinations or defenses such as when the student completes a proposal defense), the Chair can ask questions of clarification or interpretation. The Chair can also interpret departmental policy and help to ensure fairness and equity in the treatment of graduate students during the program. The Chair may be asked to vote, so it is important that s/he read components of the student's work including the written comprehensive exam, the research proposal, and the final thesis.

2.1.4 Departmental Obligations for Chairing Committees

It is a collective responsibility of all faculty members to participate in Chairing committees regardless of whether or not they have graduate students. Note that the Chair of the Advisory committee cannot pass judgment on matters that are not normally addressed by the committee (e.g., academic dishonesty). Matters that cannot be addressed by the committee must be referred to the Head of Department and Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for resolution. The Chair should provide all the relevant information in such a situation.

2.1.5 Course Requirements

A fully-qualified Master's student is required to take **a minimum of 12 credit units** of graduate coursework (each graduate course is typically 3 credit units). This must include **GEOG 803.3 - Research Methods in Geography**. It is expected that a Master's student will normally complete these requirements in the first year of study. Failure to do so may result in the student's progress being rated as unsatisfactory. Renewal of funding for graduate students requires satisfactory progress in the program of study.

Graduate students are also required to take a short online course relating to the University of Saskatchewan's guidelines and policies on ethics and integrity. The course is **GSR 960** entitled "**Introduction to Ethics and Integrity**" and if the student is doing research involving working with people they are also required to take **GSR 961 "Ethics and Integrity in Human Research"**. Both courses have no credit unit value but are a requirement of their graduate course work.

The remaining course work will be in the student's area of specialization and are selected in consultation with the advisory committee. A student may take **one** 3rd or 4th year undergraduate course to fulfill the 12 credit requirement with the approval of the advisory committee. Credit may be granted for graduate-level courses taken previously at this or another university, provided they have not already been credited toward a bachelor's or professional degree. The GAC may require a student to sit an examination to demonstrate proficiency before credit is granted for courses taken at another university.

Masters students are also required to register in these two courses:

1. **GEOG 990 - Departmental Seminar**
2. **GEOG 994 – Research - every term until successful defense of their thesis.**

At the Master's level, to retain standing, students must achieve a grade of at least 60% in all courses required for the degree and maintain an overall weighted average of at least 70% in those courses. Students with scholarships must maintain a 80% average to retain funding.

If the student fails to meet this standard, the advisory committee will assess the student's performance and determine an appropriate course of action. The student may be permitted to re-take a course or undertake other remedial work if, in the opinion of the advisory committee, the overall performance of the student was otherwise satisfactory. If this is not the assessment of the advisory committee, they will recommend that the student discontinue.

2.1.6 Thesis Proposal

During the first year of residence, the student will select a thesis research topic and prepare a thesis proposal. The student will be guided in this effort by their supervisor and advisory committee. The GEOG 803.3 course provides additional guidance to the Master's student in the preparation of this proposal. The proposal should clearly establish the objectives of the research, outline the theoretical context of the research, and identify the methods to be used to meet the research objectives. The deadline for completing the proposal is 8 months from 1st registration in the program.

The thesis proposal is submitted to the student's supervisor for review and recommendations for revision. Once the proposal is judged satisfactory by the supervisor, copies of the proposal are provided to the other members of the advisory committee. The advisory committee will meet and determine by consensus, if the proposal provides a satisfactory basis for thesis research. All students are required to have a thesis proposal approved by their advisory committee by the end of their first eight months' residence. Written confirmation of approval must be filed with the graduate secretary by the committee chair. The supervisor will ensure that a copy of the approved thesis proposal is placed in the student's departmental file.

2.1.7 Ethical Approval to Conduct Research

All research that involves living human or animal subjects, living or not, requires review and approval by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Office (<http://research.usask.ca/for-researchers/ethics/>). Physical geographers may require research permits before field work can commence. Obtaining these permits is the responsibility of the graduate student. Students who work with animal research with potential environmental impacts, and/or in parks or protected areas are also responsible for obtaining the necessary permits or permissions before undertaking their research. Your supervisor can guide you with this process.

2.1.8 Permission to Write the Thesis

Once the student has completed the data collection and analysis components of the thesis research, a meeting of the advisory committee will be held to evaluate the quality of that work and to assess whether it is adequate to permit writing of the thesis. The supervisor will determine when permission to write the thesis should be requested from the advisory committee.

Permission to write must be indicated in writing and placed in the student's file by the committee chair.

2.1.9 Colloquium

GEOG 990 (Departmental Seminar) is a required class for all Master's students.

Policy for Course Credit in GEOG 990

To obtain credit for GEOG 990 students must complete two requirements:

- (1) Present their research at a departmental seminar; and,
- (2) Attend one conference, which could be but is not limited to the University of Saskatchewan's Graduate Students' Association Conference. Presentation by the student at the conference is optional. You must provide proof of your attendance at the conference (i.e., a copy of your registration is required) to the Graduate Secretary.

Presentation: Each student will be required to give one 30-minute departmental colloquium presentation on the day of his/her thesis defence. The expectation is that the presentation will be 20 minutes followed by a 10-minute question open period. All members of the student's advisory committee are expected to attend the colloquium presentation by the student for the purpose of meeting the requirements of GEOG 990. The supervisory committee chair will communicate to the Graduate Chair that this presentation has been satisfactorily completed.

The presentation should include:

- i. A statement of the purpose and objectives of the research, framed within a gap(s) in the literature.
- ii. A summary of the research methodology identifying the study location or population, and the data gathering and analysis techniques employed.
- iii. A presentation of the major results of the analysis.
- iv. A discussion of the meaning and significance of the results in the context of earlier research.
- v. A clear statement of the principal conclusions drawn from the research.

This requirement cannot be met by presenting at a conference.

2.1.10 Requesting Extension of Time Limit

Students who have almost reached the time limit of the program without completing program requirements should meet with their Advisory Committee. If the Advisory Committee supports an extension, students may apply in writing to the CGPS, with a written indication of support from the Supervisor and the Advisory Committee, indicating reasons for the slow progress and providing a detailed plan, with indications on time, for completing remaining requirements. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for extension. Please do so within 4 weeks of the deadline.

Time extensions may be granted by CGPS for a period up to 4 months. Time extensions are granted to students who encounter problems while actively trying to finish their program. Students entering their final year should have a schedule for completion approved by their advisory committee. There are forms to be completed.

2.1.11 Thesis

The thesis must be based on original research and demonstrate judgment and scholarship on the part of the candidate. The quality of the thesis is evaluated by an examining committee consisting of the advisory committee and an external examiner who usually is a faculty member in another department at the University and who is familiar with the thesis subject.

At least one month prior to the thesis defense, the supervisor must work with the Graduate Secretary to finalize the date, time, and proposed name of external examiner. The GAC Chair will review it and approve within 2-3 working days. In the interim, neither student nor any member of the advisory committee can provide the external examiner with a copy of the thesis. Once approved, there must be at least 3 weeks provided for reading of the thesis and preparation for the defense. *These time lines are strictly enforced.*

Keep in mind that from the time the draft of the thesis is first submitted to the supervisor, to the time the final copy is submitted to the graduate advisory committee for review, there may be a 3 – 4 month waiting period before the student is able to defend. Students must allow for this time in their program scheduling.

2.1.12 Appointment of the Thesis Examining Committee

The thesis examining committee for a Master's student consists of the advisory committee and an external examiner approved by the Chair of the Graduate Affairs Committee. The external examiner is usually a faculty member in another department at the University who is familiar with the subject matter. The student cannot have previously discussed their research with the external nor have any personal relationship with the external examiner.

2.1.13 Examination of the Thesis

The examination of the thesis is a public, oral examination conducted by the thesis examining committee. It is usually about two hours in length, and limited to work done by the candidate for the thesis and to knowledge of directly related material. At the conclusion of the examination, the thesis examining committee meets to determine if the thesis, and its defence by the student, meets the requirements for the degree. The student is advised immediately of the thesis examining committee's decision.

2.1.14 Annual Progress Reports

Each year a student is expected to demonstrate progress towards completing course requirements. Failure to make progress may result in a recommendation that the student withdraw. Additionally, students supported by funding must maintain specific grade point averages in order to retain funding. Students on scholarship must maintain an 80% GPA and students on Teaching Assistantship must maintain a 70% GPA. Students failing to make these requirements will have funding withdrawn and may face an assessment of unsatisfactory progress.

2.1.15 Thesis Format

Students may prepare a thesis by manuscript format (typically 2 manuscripts) or a thesis by traditional format.

A detailed description of the thesis format requirements is provided on the CGPS website at:
<https://students.usask.ca/graduate/thesis-preparation.php#Beforebeginning>

After the defence it is the responsibility of the student to deliver or arrange to have the bound copies of his/her thesis delivered to the supervisor, the Department of Geography and Planning, and submit their thesis electronically to the CGPS.

The Department recommends that students have their thesis bound by Universal Bindery. They are located at 516A Duchess Street, Saskatoon SK S7K 0R1. You can contact them by phone at 306-652-8313 or 1-800-888-563-6368. You will need to print your thesis before you deliver to them for binding (i.e., if you want 3 bound copies, you need to have printed 3 copies of your thesis). The title of the thesis, for the spine of the book, must be shortened to 40 characters including spaces.

2.2 Ph.D. DEGREE PROGRAM

2.2.1 Program of Studies

The Ph.D. program involves course work, qualifying exam (in some cases), comprehensive exam, and the preparation of a thesis. The purpose of the courses is to complete the student's general training in Geography and to develop an area of specialization sufficient to permit the student to undertake research which will make a contribution to the discipline. The selection of course work and thesis research is directed by the advisory committee.

An appropriate supervisor must be available before a student will be recommended by the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) for admission to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (see section 2.4 for more information on the GAC). Faculty serving as graduate student supervisors must be members of the Department of Geography and Planning and of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Adjunct and Associate faculty of the Department of Geography and Planning are restricted to serving as co-supervisors with a regular faculty member.

The supervisor, in consultation with the student, invites others to serve on the advisory committee. The advisory committee has the primary responsibility for directing and evaluating the student's graduate study. The advisory committee recommends a program of studies for the graduate student, and may recommend revisions to that program. A majority of the members of the advisory committee must approve all recommendations with regard to the student's program.

The supervisor is responsible for calling meetings of the advisory committee. Keeping of minutes of the meetings, and distributing those minutes to the student and advisory committee members is undertaken by the advisory committee chair with the support of the graduate secretary. Advisory committee meetings are held at least once per year and as required to evaluate and assist the student in their program of study.

2.2.2 The Graduate Advisory Committee: Function & Structure

The graduate student advisory committee is to assist the student in completing the program requirements. Members are brought together for their substantive expertise in the research area.

PhD committees are composed of a minimum of 5 members:

- 1 Head of Department or Designate who acts as Chair (non-voting except to break a tie);
- 1 Research Supervisor;
- 3 or 4 committee members, at least one of whom is from Geography and at least one of whom is from another department (the latter is the cognate member);

2.2.3 The Role of the Chair of Advisory Committees

Purpose: The role of the Chair of graduate student Advisory Committees is to maintain the fairness and integrity of the process for both students and faculty.

Duties: The Chair is required to attend all meetings and to work with the advisor to complete minutes of each meeting, record votes, and file the records with the graduate secretary. During all meetings (including examinations or defenses such as when the student completes a proposal defense), the Chair can ask questions of clarification or interpretation. The Chair can also interpret departmental policy and help to ensure fairness and equity in the treatment of graduate students during the program. The Chair may be asked to vote, so it is important that s/he read components of the student's work including the written comprehensive exam, the research proposal, and the final thesis.

2.2.4 Departmental Obligations for Chairing Committees

It is a collective responsibility of all faculty members to participate in Chairing committees regardless of whether or not they have graduate students. Note that the Chair of the Advisory committee cannot pass judgment on matters that are not normally addressed by the committee (e.g., academic dishonesty). Matters that cannot be addressed by the committee must be referred to the Head of Department and Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for resolution. The Chair should provide all the relevant information in such a situation.

2.2.5 Course Requirements

A fully-qualified Ph.D. student is required to take a minimum of 6 credit units of graduate course work. This must include **GEOG 803.3 Research Methods in Geography**. If a student has completed GEOG 803.3 or an equivalent course then another course must be substituted. Additional courses may be required if the advisory committee feels that the student's background is deficient in some area. All required courses must be noted on the Program of Studies.

Graduate students are also required to take a short online course relating to the University of Saskatchewan's guidelines and policies on ethics and integrity. The course is **GSR 960 entitled "Introduction to Ethics and Integrity"** and if the student is doing research involving working with people they are also required to take **GSR 961 "Ethics and Integrity in Human Research"**. Both courses have no credit unit value but are a requirement of their graduate course work.

At the Doctoral level, students must achieve a grade of at least 70% in all courses required for the degree. Students with scholarship must maintain an 80% average to retain funding. If the student fails to meet this standard, the advisory committee will assess the student's performance and determine an appropriate course of action. The student may be permitted to re-take a course or undertake other remedial work if, in the opinion of the advisory committee, the overall performance of the student was otherwise satisfactory. If this is not the assessment of the advisory committee, they will recommend that the student discontinue.

Doctoral students are also required to register in these two courses:

1. **GEOG 990 - Departmental Seminar**
2. **GEOG 996 – Research - every term until successful defense of their thesis.**

2.2.6 Qualifying Exam/ Needs Assessment

A Ph.D. student is required to undertake a qualifying examination if the advisory committee determines it is necessary. The purpose of this requirement is to determine any weaknesses in the student's background which should be remedied in the courses included on the approved program of study.

i) **Timing**

A needs assessment must be completed within the first two terms of a student's program in consultation with the advisory committee. The results must be placed in the student's file by the advisory committee chair.

2.2.7 Comprehensive Exam

1. **Students are required to complete both the comprehensive examination and their thesis proposal within 16 months of entering the Ph.D. program.** Failure to undertake the examination within 16 months will be considered in the annual review of progress.
2. Prior to taking the examination, the student will have completed the course work required by the Program of Studies.
3. Three months before the start of the comprehensive exam, the Advisory Committee in consultation with the student, will:
 - A) define (1) a major area of specialization within geography for the purposes of the comprehensive examination and (2) a research area that is cognate to the student's proposed research.
 - B) provide a reading list that will form the basis of the comprehensive examination. Please note that each area above has its own reading list. Combined, the two reading lists should total about 8-10 pages. Faculty may not add materials to the list within 3 months of the examination. However, students may address questions on their exam from readings that are not on the list. The department must receive a copy of the reading list to be placed in the student's file and in a central file.
4. **Examinations:**

- A) Written: There are two written examinations within one comprehensive exam.
- i) One written examination will assess the student's knowledge of the major area of specialization and its place within the discipline of Geography.
 - ii) The other written examination will focus on topics cognate to the student's area of thesis research as outlined in the thesis proposal approved by the Advisory Committee.
 - iii) The written examinations will be compiled by the supervisor in consultation with the Advisory Committee.
 - iv) For each written exam, the student will be required to answer two questions with some choice available.
 - v) The answer to each question should be approximately 2500 words in length (excluding references). (Note: It is assumed that the materials referred to in the exam are in the required reading list unless otherwise stated by the student.)
 - vi) Each individual exam will be completed on a "take-home" basis within a 24-hour period.
 - vii) The written examinations will be written independently of one another and both must be completed within a 7-day period.
- B) Oral:
- i) The oral examination will cover not only topics in the major area of specialization and the thesis research area, but may also address broader issues in the discipline of Geography as a whole.
 - ii) The oral examination will be conducted by the members of the Advisory Committee.
 - iii) The oral examination is to be completed within seven days following the completion of the written examinations.
- 5. Results of Examination:**
- The Advisory Committee members will determine by consensus or majority vote whether the written and oral components of the comprehensive exam is:
- A) passed without condition
B) passed with condition (e.g. conditions may include requirement to re-write one of the exam papers, to take another course)
C) failed
- In the event of failure, the Advisory Committee will recommend:
- i) that the student be granted a second opportunity to attempt the comprehensive exam.
 - If a second opportunity is granted, the student must pass the examination on her/his second attempt or be required to withdraw.
 - A second examination will normally take place within 2-3 months of the first examination.

- ii) that the student be required to withdraw from the program. This recommendation is made to the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and he/she will make the final decision. Please note that the chairperson does NOT normally ask questions at the oral examination. However, the chair should have read the examination papers and be prepared to cast a ballot in the case of a tie. The chairperson of the committee need not vote except to break a tie.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide a copy of the written examinations and the examination reading list to the student's file. It is the responsibility of the chair of the advisory committee to inform the graduate secretary and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of the outcome of the comprehensive examination. The decision of the committee must be communicated to the student immediately and to the GAC Chair within 24 hours of the examination.

2.2.8 Thesis Proposal

During the first year of residence, the student will select a thesis research topic and prepare a thesis proposal. The student will be guided in this effort by their supervisor and advisory committee. The GEOG 803.3 course provides additional guidance to the Master's student in the preparation of this proposal. The proposal should clearly establish the objectives of the research, outline the theoretical context of the research, and identify the methods to be used to meet the research objectives. The deadline for completing the proposal is 8 months from 1st registration in the program.

The thesis proposal is submitted to the student's supervisor for review and recommendations for revision. Once the proposal is judged satisfactory by the supervisor, copies of the proposal are provided to the other members of the advisory committee. The advisory committee will meet and determine by consensus, if the proposal provides a satisfactory basis for thesis research. All students are required to have a thesis proposal approved by their advisory committee by the end of their first eight months' residence. Written confirmation of approval must be filed with the graduate secretary by the committee chair. The supervisor will ensure that a copy of the approved thesis proposal is placed in the student's departmental file.

2.2.9 Ethical Approval to Conduct Research

All research that involves living human or animal subjects, living or not, requires review and approval by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Office (<http://research.usask.ca/for-researchers/ethics/>). Physical geographers may require research permits before field work can commence. Obtaining these permits is the responsibility of the graduate student. Students who work with animal research with potential environmental impacts, and/or in parks or protected areas are also responsible for obtaining the necessary permits or permissions before undertaking their research. Your supervisor can guide you with this process.

2.2.10 Permission to Write the Thesis

Once the student has completed the data collection and analysis components of the thesis research, a meeting of the advisory committee will be held to evaluate the quality of that work and to assess whether it is adequate to permit writing of the thesis. The supervisor will determine when permission to write the thesis should be requested from the advisory committee.

Permission to write must be indicated in writing and placed in the student's file by the committee chair.

2.2.11 Colloquium

GEOG 990 (Departmental Seminar) is a required class for all Doctoral students.

Policy for Course Credit in GEOG 990

To obtain credit for GEOG 990 students must complete two requirements:

- (1) Present their research at a departmental seminar; and,
- (2) Attend one conference, which could be but is not limited to the University of Saskatchewan's Graduate Students' Association Conference. Presentation by the student at the conference is optional. You must provide proof of your attendance at the conference (i.e., a copy of your registration is required) to the Graduate Secretary.

Presentation: Each student will be required to give one 30-minute departmental colloquium presentation on the day of his/her thesis defence. The expectation is that the presentation will be 20 minutes followed by a 10-minute question open period. All members of the student's advisory committee are expected to attend the colloquium presentation by the student for the purpose of meeting the requirements of GEOG 990. The supervisory committee chair will communicate to the Graduate Chair that this presentation has been satisfactorily completed.

The presentation should include:

- i. A statement of the purpose and objectives of the research, framed within a gap(s) in the literature.
- ii. A summary of the research methodology identifying the study location or population, and the data gathering and analysis techniques employed.
- iii. A presentation of the major results of the analysis.
- iv. A discussion of the meaning and significance of the results in the context of earlier research.
- v. A clear statement of the principal conclusions drawn from the research.

This requirement cannot be met by presenting at a conference.

2.2.12 Requesting Extension of Time Limit

Students who have almost reached the time limit of the program without completing program requirements should meet with their Advisory Committee. If the Advisory Committee supports an extension, students may apply in writing to the CGPS, with a written indication of support from the Supervisor and the Advisory Committee, indicating reasons for the slow progress and providing a detailed plan, with indications on time, for completing remaining requirements. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for extension. Please do so within 4 weeks of the deadline.

Time extensions may be granted by CGPS for a period up to 4 months. Time extensions are granted to students who encounter problems while actively trying to finish their program. Students entering their final year should have a schedule for completion approved by their advisory committee. There are forms to be completed.

2.2.13 Thesis

The thesis must be based on original research and demonstrate judgment and scholarship on the part of the candidate. It must represent a worthwhile contribution to Geography which would warrant publication, in whole or in part, in a recognized scholarly form. The quality of the dissertation is evaluated by an examining committee, consisting of the advisory committee and an external examiner from another university who is knowledgeable in the subject matter.

At least one month prior to the defense, the supervisor must work with the graduate secretary to submit necessary forms to the CGPS, indicating date, time, and proposed names of external examiners for approval by the CGPS. Faculty must allow 2-3 days for the forms to clear the Departmental office. This is reviewed at CGPS and approved within 2-3 working days. In the interim, neither student nor any member of the advisory committee can provide the external examiner with a copy of the thesis. Once approved, there must be at least 4 weeks (for a PhD) provided for reading of the thesis (by the external examiner) and preparation for the defence.
These time lines are strictly enforced.

Keep in mind that from the time the draft of the thesis is first submitted to the supervisor, to the time the final copy is submitted to the graduate advisory committee for review, there may be a 3 to 4 month waiting period before the student is able to defend. Students must allow for this time in their program scheduling.

2.2.14 Appointment of the Thesis Examining Committee

The thesis examining committee for a Ph.D. student consists of the advisory committee and an external examiner appointed by the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The external examiner is usually a member of faculty at another University who is an expert in the thesis subject. The GAC chair will consult with advisory committee and then advise the Dean of the names and contact information for four individuals who are qualified to act as the external examiner. The names are presented in order of priority, and the final selection is made by the Dean. Details of this process are on the CGPS website. The student cannot have previously discussed their research with the external examiner or had any personal relationship.

2.2.15 Examination of the Thesis

The examination of the thesis is a public, oral examination conducted by the thesis examining committee. It is usually 2-3 hours in length, and limited to work done by the candidate for the thesis and to knowledge of directly related material. At the conclusion of the examination, the thesis examining committee meets to determine if the thesis and its defense by the student, meet the requirements for the degree. The student is advised immediately of the thesis examining committee's decision.

2.2.16 Annual Progress Reports

Each year a student is expected to demonstrate progress towards completing course requirements. Failure to make progress may result in a recommendation that the student withdraw. Additionally, students supported by funding must maintain specific grade point averages in order to retain funding. Students on scholarship must maintain an 80% GPA and students on Teaching Assistantship must maintain a 70% GPA. Students failing to make these

requirements will have funding withdrawn and may face an assessment of unsatisfactory progress.

2.2.17 Thesis Format

Students may prepare a thesis by manuscript format (typically 3 manuscripts) or a thesis by traditional format.

A detailed description of the thesis format requirements is provided on the CGPS website at:
<https://students.usask.ca/graduate/thesis-preparation.php#Beforebeginning>

After the defence it is the responsibility of the student to deliver or arrange to have the bound copies of his/her thesis delivered to the supervisor, the Department of Geography and Planning, and submit their thesis electronically to the CGPS.

The Department recommends that students have their thesis bound by Universal Bindery. They are located at 516A Duchess Street, Saskatoon SK S7K 0R1. You can contact them by phone at 306-652-8313 or 1-800-888-563-6368. You will need to print your thesis before you deliver to them for binding (i.e., if you want 3 bound copies, you need to have printed 3 copies of your thesis). The title of the thesis, for the spine of the book, must be shortened to 40 characters including spaces.

2.3 THE GRADUATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

It is the responsibility of all departments to monitor the progress of graduate students registered in programs of study under their direction. In the Department of Geography and Planning, this responsibility is delegated to the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC). The GAC is charged with overseeing all aspects of the operation of the graduate program in Geography and with administering the program according to the regulations of the Department and of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The chair and members of the GAC are appointed by the Head of the Department.

Within its general mandate, the GAC is charged with the following specific duties:

- i) To make recommendations to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies on behalf of the Department of Geography and Planning on all applications for admission to graduate studies, graduate student programs of study, and applications for University of Saskatchewan Graduate Scholarships.
- ii) To make recommendations to the Head of the Department of Geography and Planning on the award of scholarships and appointment of Graduate Teaching Fellows.
- iii) To review annually the regulations of the Department of Geography and Planning affecting graduate studies and to recommend revisions of those regulations to the Department.

The GAC chair is charged with the following specific duties:

- i) To call regular meetings of the GAC and to deal with policy, program, or university student issues.
- ii) To facilitate progress of students in their programs
- iii) To report the activities of the GAC to faculty meetings of the Department.
- IV) To ensure representation of the Department of Geography and Planning at all faculty meetings of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Section 3: Graduate Courses in Geography

The graduate courses offered by the Department of Geography and Planning are found in the online University course calendar at: <http://www.usask.ca/calendar/coursecat/>

Section 4: Graduate Student Life on Campus

4.1 THE GRADUATE STUDENT COMMUNITY IN GEOGRAPHY

Graduate student life forms an important part of the graduate experience in geography at the University of Saskatchewan. Social and academic events have been developed to provide graduate students with the intellectual and social support necessary to create a positive and stimulating learning environment. At the beginning of each school year, the geography department hosts a welcome barbecue, providing new graduate students with the opportunity to meet faculty and fellow students. In addition, this past year the students' council organized a successful winter holiday fundraising dinner, New Years and end-of-term potluck celebrations, as well as curling and skating events for faculty and students. Student presentations at colloquia, as well as professional development seminars held by the department further contribute to the intellectual vigour of the graduate program.

The graduate student council is not only active in organizing social events, but also in working with faculty to accommodate students' academic needs, as well as providing feedback to the department on issues and policies that concern graduate students. We look forward to seeing you as a graduate student in geography at upcoming student council meetings and social activities!

To help students in their studies, graduate students have access to the computer lab, in office computers, printer, photocopier, fax facilities, and extra GB storage.

Postal address for graduate students:

Department of Geography and Planning
University of Saskatchewan
117 Science Place
Saskatoon SK S7N 5C8
Canada

E-mail (all grad students): geog_grad@usask.ca

4.2 THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION AT THE U OF S

The official website for the U of S Graduate Students' Association (GSA) is www.gsa.usask.ca. The GSA represents graduate students on most university committees, to advocate for unique needs and concerns of graduate students. Graduate students from all departments may contact the GSA for information or assistance with problems related to university affairs:

Graduate Student Association Office:
Emmanuel & St. Chad
1337 College Drive
Saskatoon SK S7N 0W6
Telephone: (306) 966-8471
Fax: (306) 966-8598

Section 5: Graduate Student Funding

All successful applicants for graduate studies in the Department are considered for support or scholarship on the basis of merit. Several types of financial support are available through the Department of Geography and Planning and the University of Saskatchewan. Eligible students may also hold other scholarships and awards such as those provided by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canadian Institute for Health Research, and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies maintains an up-to-date awards database (<https://students.usask.ca/money/awards/graduate-awards.php>).

Many scholarships require some service in the form of teaching or research assistantships. The duties of a teaching assistant usually include instructing and marking laboratories and tutorials for introductory classes. The duties of a research assistant will vary depending on the supervisor and type of research project they are assisting with.

Department of Geography and Planning Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants

Students may be hired as graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs) to serve courses taught by professors in the department. TAs must be paid the minimum rates for graduate students that are set out by the University. In all cases, full-time students working as TAs should not be required to work for more than a maximum of 204 hours per term (“normally” 12 hours per week). Students and faculty must complete and sign a *Statement of Duties* that specifies the expectations of work, expected number of hours per week, and the total hours of work before duties begin.

Department of Geography and Planning Policy on Graduate Research Assistants

Students may be hired as graduate research assistants (RAs) by professors in the department. RAs must be paid the minimum rates for graduate students that are set out by the University. In all cases, full-time students working as RAs should not be required to work for more than a maximum of 204 hours per term (“normally” 12 hours per week). Students and faculty must complete and sign a *Statement of Duties* that specifies the expectations of work, expected number of hours per week, and the total hours of work before duties begin.

Procedures for Appeals of Work

Students who believe that the work is being unfairly or inappropriately allocated should first see the instructor to discuss the assignment. If the student is not satisfied with the explanation or expectations of the work assignment, the student may approach the Chair of the Graduate Affairs Committee, or the Head of the Department to assist in sorting out the terms and conditions of the assignment. In some cases, a representative of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies may be necessary to help resolve the issue. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter fairly to both student and faculty member involved in the assignment.

Instructors who believe that the work is not being completed by students should first meet with the student to discuss the assignment. If the instructor is not able to resolve the issue with the student, the Head of the Department should be approached to discuss the situation. If it is determined that the student did not undertake the assigned work without due cause, the student may be required to refund income received and/or may forfeit future funding from research or teaching assistantships.