

# **Graduate Program in Geography**

## **Ph.D. Degree Learning Goals and Assessment**

The doctoral program in Geography trains students at the highest level to assume leadership roles in research, teaching, and applied work in Human Geography, Human-Environment Geography, and Physical Geography.

**Learning Goal 1 for Students: Master the existing scholarship in the study of Geography with the goal of using this scholarship in the pursuit of their own research.**

Assessment of graduate student achievement of Goal 1:

- Grades in graduate courses
- Completion of written and oral qualifying examinations assessing depth and breadth of knowledge in three defined fields of Geography
- Review by faculty of student progress with close advising and mentoring
- Placement in positions and careers that require ability and scholarship in this field.

Roles of the Graduate Program in Geography in helping students to achieve Goal 1:

- Close advising to assure that students are being prepared in a coherent and academically rigorous fashion
- Effective monitoring of student progress by the faculty advisor, the dissertation committee, and the graduate program director, including an annual review of all students by the Graduate Faculty
- Exit surveys completed by students upon graduation
- Evaluations of teaching effectiveness of instructors in graduate courses
  - If effectiveness is below expectations, work with instructors to improve effectiveness
- Periodic review of curricular offerings and assessment tools
  - By program faculty
  - In consultation with the office of the dean of the graduate school and/or the unit dean

**Learning Goal 2 for Students: Engage in and conduct original research**

Assessment of graduate student achievement of Goal 2:

- Preparation and defense of Ph.D. dissertation proposal
- Engage in and conduct original research, using methods appropriate to the research project
- Assessment of quality of Ph.D. dissertation:
  - Public defense of dissertation
  - Critical reading of dissertation by committee of graduate faculty members and a committee member from outside of the graduate program
- Achievement of students as evidenced by professional placement, selection for conference presentations, peer-reviewed publications and individual grant attainment.

Roles of the Graduate Program in Geography in helping students to achieve Goal 2:

- Provide early introduction to research methods and active research
- Maintain adequate funding levels through the research phase
- Provide comprehensive advising and assist in the identification of mentors
- Provide assistance to students seeking external funding via GradFund-The Resource Center for Graduate Student External Support
- Facilitate process of applying to the Graduate School for supplemental funding for graduate student travel and summer research

**Learning Goal 3 for Students: Prepare to be professionals in careers that require training at the highest level in Geography**

Assessment of graduate student achievement of Goal 3:

- Review evidence of scholarly activity
- Evaluations of teaching effectiveness of graduate instructors
- Participation of students in professionalization activities offered by the department
- Collection of placement data
- Review by external advisory committees, both inside of and external to the academy

Roles of the Graduate Program in Geography in helping students to achieve Goal 2:

- Promote and provide experience and training in teaching
  - Encourage student involvement in programs associated with the Teaching Assistant Project (TAP)
  - Encourage enrollment in Introduction to College Teaching I and II
  - Evaluations of TAs by faculty supervisors
- Foster the development of a scholarly community through regular programmatic offerings
  - Host Workshops and other events that promote professional development programs in such areas as human subjects research, library use, course management software, interview skills, presentation skills, development of CVs, use of research tools, and proposal writing
  - Develop or enhance programs related to job and networking skills, including activity in professional societies and preparation for necessary certifications.
  - Offer frequent community-building activities such lecture series.
- Facilitate flexible options for students with interdisciplinary interests, and encourage students to consider certificates in interdisciplinary programs
- Acquaint students with non-academic career opportunities.

**The leadership of the Geography graduate program** will regularly review the structure and content of the PhD program and the feedback received from assessments and surveys. These reviews will be used to provide the best possible education to students in order to meet the needs for highly trained individuals in Human Geography, Human-Environment Geography, and Physical Geography.