

IMPORTANT: COVID-19 policies/procedures are listed in **addendum at the end**

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

(please place this PDF file on your computer desktop for easy reference)

Understanding Your Degree Requirements

Be sure that you are aware of all requirements for your degree and their associated timing. The links below to both the Department's website and the Grad School's web site provide this information for both the MS and PhD requirements. Your advisor will also be aware of each of these requirements. If you have any questions about the requirements after you have reviewed them online, set up a meeting with your advisor to discuss your questions.

Geological Sciences

M.S. Requirements: <https://geology.missouri.edu/grad/master-science-program>

Ph.D. Requirements: <https://geology.missouri.edu/grad/doctor-philosophy-program>

The MU Graduate Studies Program Academic Process, Policies, and Forms

For M.S. Students: <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/academics/process/masters-process/> and: <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-requirements/masters-grad-requirements.php>

For Ph.D. Students: <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/academics/process/doctoral-process/> and: <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-requirements/doctoral-grad-requirements.php>

General Link to Grad School Policies and Procedures: <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/policies/>

Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines: <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/policies/thesis-dissertation.php>

General Information for New Graduate Students:
<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/admissions/new-to-Mizzou/>

NEW FOR 2020: There is now a 'degree audit' system available to MS student that allows you to view your progress toward your degree. Go to: <https://mydegreeplanner.missouri.edu/>. This is a 'one-stop shopping' provides view of all classes you have taken or are in progress, as well as which degree requirements have been satisfied are need to be completed. It is very useful. A similar degree audit system is planned for the doctoral programs at MU, but will likely not come online until 2021 or 2022.

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Mandatory Training Programs

All graduate students are required to complete online training for a number of programs. These are typically completed once, when a new student begins study. These include the following three programs: “Not Anymore” (Title IX), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and Harassment Prevention. Please make sure you have completed these. See <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/professional-development/build-your-skills/inclusive-organizations/mandatory-training.php> for further information.

Academic Progress

Graduate students are required to remain in good academic standing with the MU Graduate Studies Program by maintaining a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or better. A GPA below this minimum will result in the student being placed on probation, which may eventually result in dismissal. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better is required for graduation. The Department of Geological Sciences requires a minimum GPS of 3.2 for scholarship eligibility.

As required by MU’s Graduate School, each spring, graduate students are required to submit a self-assessment report of their academic progress. On the advice of the Graduate School, starting with the 2019-2020 academic year, the department’s assessment will also involve incorporate Individual Development Plans at the start of the academic year. Students will develop these with their advisors, and these plans will be revisited at the time of the spring assessment. Plans will also be submitted to the department. Detailed instructions will be provided by the Director of Graduate Studies.

As part of the assessment, graduate students must include a copy of the Program of Study (Form M-2 for MS students; Form D-2 for PhD students).

Ph.D. candidates (i.e., Ph.D. students who pass their Comprehensive Exam) are required to maintain continuous enrollment until the successful defense of their dissertation. This requires, at a minimum, of enrolling in Geol 9090 Research for two (2) hours minimum each fall and spring semester, and one (1) hour each summer session. The campus policy is that failure to maintain continuous enrollment terminates candidacy, so please take heed.

If you enroll in a graduate level course outside of the Arts & Science College (e.g., an engineering class or a course in the agricultural school), you will be charged the relevant course fees, which are not covered by your tuition waiver. In these cases, the department has a policy to reimburse you for the course fees with scholarship funds. After successful completion of the course, please provide a copy of your billing statement showing the fees charged to the department chair. You will receive a corresponding amount of scholarship during the next academic term, provided you are scholarship eligible.

Graduate Student Exams (Including Defenses)

Following department policies, please coordinate with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) of the date, time, and place of oral graduate exams (including defenses), in order to avoid scheduling problems. The DGS will maintain a master calendar containing all scheduled exams (this will also be available from the administrative office in Room 101), and exam rooms will not be scheduled by the front office staff without approval by the DGS. In accordance with

IMPORTANT: COVID-19 policies/procedures are listed in **addendum at the end** university policy, graduate exams will *only be scheduled when the university is in regular session* (Fall, Spring, or Summer academic terms).

M.S. and Ph.D. students must provide at least **one week notice** via Geobulletin and/or public posting within the department of the time and place of final thesis or dissertation defenses presentations and PhD qualifying and comprehensive exams.

Title IX Compliance

In accordance with MU policies, all MU employees (including Graduate Research Assistants and Graduate Teaching Assistants) are classified as ‘Mandated Reporters’ under Title IX. Please make sure you have completed the appropriate online training. At present, all new MU students are required to complete the training entitled ‘Not Anymore’.

This can be found at the following link: <http://title9.missouri.edu/rights-responsibilities/training.php>

Teaching-Related Policies

If you are ill, or cannot fulfill your assignment for some other reason, phone the department office (882-2040 or 882-6785) in sufficient time for a substitute to be arranged. Should it be necessary for you to be away from Columbia briefly, it is your responsibility to: 1) ensure that another teaching assistant meets your classes in your absence and 2) notify the professor-in-charge in advance. This includes absences to allow you to attend professional meetings (e.g. GSA, AGU), conduct thesis research, etc.

Many instructors of introductory courses (Principles and Environmental) have weekly meetings with their lab TA’s to review and discuss the upcoming lab exercise. These meetings will be at a time available to all TA’s for the course, and they are not optional!

All class policies, examination dates, etc., should be provided to students as part of your lab syllabus. All subsequent class announcements concerning class policies, examinations, etc., should be made to the entire class so that all students have an equal opportunity to get the required information. You will generate problems for yourself and the department if only part of your class receives information. You must become familiar with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as it applies to communicating student information (for details on FERPA, see: <http://registrar.missouri.edu/policies/ferpa.php>).

Also, please note that **FERPA applies to ALL student records**, not simply grades or other information of immediate pertinence to a course. This includes, but is not limited to, personal information provided by students in applications for graduate study (please do not solicit faculty for this type of information).

You are expected to be available during your office hours or by appointment to students who are having difficulty with classes. However, you are not expected to serve as a tutor. Tutoring may be available to students through the Learning Center, either in person (<http://learningcenter.missouri.edu/>)

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You should encourage your students to make a conscientious effort to master the material covered by a given laboratory exercise during the laboratory sessions. This is in the student's best interest because you are immediately available to provide assistance, but it is also in your best interest. If students do not make good use of their time in the lab, you will spend a lot of time during your office hours working with students just prior to examinations.

Students may press you to conduct special review sessions prior to examinations. Please advise your students at the start of the semester that review sessions that are not during student's regularly scheduled lab period will not be held. The promise of a last minute cram-session encourages some students to procrastinate. More importantly, not all of your students will be able to attend review sessions because of conflicts with other classes or work-schedules. In order to ensure that all students have the same opportunity, **THERE WILL BE NO REVIEW SESSIONS outside normal lab hours**. In previous semesters, some TA's chose to disregard this requirement and, as a result, have generated complaints from students from other sections whose TA's followed the policy. You must follow this policy despite pressure from students.

Do not provide GEOL1100, GEOL 1200, or Geol 2130 review materials in the hallways and other open spaces of the building. This includes Room 13 (the loading dock area).

Do not permit students to submit homework and other course materials using your departmental mailbox. If course materials are accepted outside of your lab/classroom, you should make sure to receive these in person (even confirming receipt via e-mail so there is a record), so there is no ambiguity as to whether or not the students have submitted their assignment. This has been an issue in the recent past, and it is better to avoid such complications.

Students may inquire about the possibility of 'extra credit' in your lab – **Do not** arrange any extra credit work. Our department policy does not permit this. The instructor for your class is also aware of this policy.

You should not enter into debates with students about grading or other policies, or about the answers to specific questions on the lecture examinations. Such complaints should always be referred to the professor in charge of the course.

Room 110 contains instructional materials for GEOL 1100 and GEOL 1200 laboratories. Please do not remove instructional materials from Room 110 except for classroom use. At the conclusion of your class, please return the materials to Room 110. Specimens without numbers are available in Room 110 for use in laboratory examinations.

Teaching assistants must not leave the classroom until all students have finished their work and have left the classroom (or the lab period has ended). On the field trip to Rock Bridge Park, be absolutely certain that all students have returned and are on the bus before leaving. All buses should leave the field at the same time after all students and instructors are accounted for.

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Do not socialize with students while they are enrolled in your class. Socializing outside of class will be perceived by fellow students as a conflict of interest. Be assured that you cannot defend yourself effectively against an accusation of partiality toward a student with whom you are socially involved.

Please refrain from discussing class matters on your personal social media.

Department Communications

Many announcements will also be made using the departmental e-mail list serve: (geobulletin-L@po.missouri.edu). You are pre-subscribed to geobulletin-L through your University e-mail account. To subscribe to geobulletin-L from another e-mail account (hotmail, gmail etc.), log onto that account, then:

1. Send e-mail to listserv@lists.missouri.edu. Leave the subject line blank. Remove any tag lines or signature files.
2. Type in the body of the message: **subscribe geobulletin-L first_name last_name**. LISTSERV will automatically pull your e-mail address out of the message; you don't need to include it. You must always send messages to the list from your University e-mail account or from an e-mail account you used to subscribe to the list.

Check the bulletin board next to Room 103 daily for general announcements or other information mentioned in e-mail (e.g., Teaching Assistant assignments).

Announcements pertaining to individuals will be placed in mailboxes.

Department Seminars

Time and place of talks by visiting seminar speakers will be posted on the bulletin board, the online speaker schedule (<https://geology.missouri.edu/> and click on “Seminars”), and announced via geobulletin. The faculty considers these sessions an integral part of the education of students rather than as optional exercises; *we expect you to attend seminars, even if the subject matter does not correspond closely to your thesis topic or career objectives.*

Care and Maintenance of Building Equipment

University policy does not allow for students’ bicycles within buildings. Custodians are required by their supervisors to enforce this policy.

Radios are permitted as long as they do not disturb others. If your neighbor can hear your radio, it’s too loud. Please use headphones out of courtesy for your peers.

Bulletin boards outside offices are for TA’s to communicate with their students. You may not post grades or student identifying items on your bulletin board ([see FERPA link noted above](#)).

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Only persons with keys are allowed in the building after 10:00 PM. DO NOT prop open outside doors for persons who do not have keys—this encourages vandalism and theft. DO NOT lend your keys to others. Remember that you are responsible for the security of your own belongings and those of others in the building. We have had problems with theft, and we cannot guarantee personal safety if the building is not locked after normal working hours. When the building is locked, be sure to re-lock doors after entering. If you are the last person to leave your office during the day or evening, lock the door.

Be particularly alert around the beginning of major holiday periods and during examination periods. Experience has shown that professional thieves use such times to raid campus buildings; because it sits at the edge of campus, the Geological Sciences building is a common target. Do not hesitate to ask persons that you do not know if they need help to find someone; this attention may discourage marauders. Keep valuable items (microscopes, cameras, purses, laptop computers, etc.) in a locked cabinet or desk when not in use.

For your privacy, we do not give out your home (land line) or cell phone numbers to any persons calling the department trying to reach you. We will leave a message in your mailbox if the caller requests it, or send you an email if it seems particularly urgent.

Because of the number of people using the building, it is essential that all exert a continuous effort to maintain its cleanliness and appearance. Each of us is responsible for maintaining a neat desk area. Tidy up laboratories, classrooms, and other facilities after you have used them. Our custodians do not clean up after us, nor should they. If you spill coffee or other things in hallways or on the stairs, please clean up after yourself. Such spills are unsightly if left and reflect on the department; at worst they may cause someone to fall and be injured. Please do not leave rock and mineral study sets in the hallway outside of your office door.

Custodians will not dispose of surplus rock samples. Rocks must be deposited on the pile outside the shipping room door (next to the parking lot) when you are finished with them. If they are in sample bags, boxes, or other containers, they must be removed and the containers placed in the dumpster.

Please make sure that department teaching labs (Rooms 103, 207, and 208) are locked when not in use – these contain teaching materials and equipment. Room 103 is locked by a key. Rooms 207 and 208 operate by card-lock (using your ID card).

Student Offices

The department seeks to provide all TA's and RA's with reasonable office space in which to work. We cannot, however, permit unlimited sprawl. Please confine your personal possessions to the immediate area of your desk, and do not encroach on others. Please keep your office space clean, particularly with regard to food materials. Also, you should comply with MU policies within your office space (e.g., drug/alcohol policy, tobacco policy, animals, etc.)

MU (including the Geology Building) operates a '**Low Waste**' policy. Under this policy, occupants of offices are responsible for removal of trash (i.e., there will be no custodial service). Therefore, please coordinate with officemates to insure garbage is removed regularly. Trash and recycling bins

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In accordance with MU Business Policy and Procedure Manual, Section 1:075, **pets “are no permitted within University buildings, except service animals trained to assist persons with disabilities ...”** If you require a service animal, please follow the procedure in Section 1:076 of the MU Business Policy and Procedure Manual.

After you complete your degree, please make sure to (1) clean your desk and office space thoroughly, (2) turn your keys in to the front office (101 Geology), and (3) provide a forwarding address for mail.

Use of Equipment and Facilities

If equipment is not operational, report it to a faculty member or to the departmental office so that it can be put in working order. If you are not familiar with the operation of particular instruments or pieces of equipment, seek advice or instruction before you attempt to use them. Our repair budget is limited.

The Department provides each graduate student with an Ethernet link to the campus internet system. Please check that the port available to you is active. If it is not, please report your office number and port number to Marsha Huckabey in the Department office. Note that wireless links are also available. Information on the wireless network service is available at: <http://doit.missouri.edu/services/internet-network/wireless-internet.html>.

Department Computer Teaching Lab (109 Geology)

Room 109 is a computer teaching lab, exclusively for departmental use. We will be teaching regular classes and labs in this room during the academic year, and the class schedule should be listed on the door (ideally). When class is not in session, the computer lab can be used by students in this department (or others who are enrolled in courses at the time). We encourage you to use the facilities and software, if it helps with your research. Please note that some restrictions may apply (e.g., licensing agreements that preclude non-classroom use), and we appreciate your compliance with these policies.

Some basic policies for Room 109:

- The room will be accessible by cardlock – your student ID should open the door, and if it does not work, please contact Marsha Huckabey for assistance.
- Please do not leave the door propped open for others to access. Anyone who has business in that room should have cardlock access.
- Students **will not be permitted to bring food or drinks** into the room in order to protect the computers.
- Please be respectful of other students working in the room.

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- The computers are intended to be used for teaching and research. Do not use the computers for personal business, including, but not limited to, social media, movies/music/other entertainment, downloading software.
- Students are not permitted to use the projection equipment in the computer lab.

Non-compliance with these policies or other behavior that is deemed abuse/misuse of the facilities may result in loss of privileges.

Departmental Main Office Facilities (101 Geology)

You will share a mailbox in the wall next to the door to the departmental office. Mail is delivered and picked up mid-morning. Stamps are not available from the departmental office.

TA's commonly prepare examinations that must be duplicated for their classes. Please bring or email a copy to the office to be duplicated. The office staff will need at least 3 working days to prepare them, so please do not request copy service for a class that begins in a few minutes (or a couple of hours). When creating lab quizzes, please keep the total pages to copy to 2. For lab final exams, a total of 4 pages should be the maximum for copying.

The departmental office is a business place, not a lounge. Office staff are available to respond to questions, but they are too busy to engage in extended social conversation, and they cannot carry out their duties in the midst of a chatting crowd. Do not distract them or interfere with their duties by gathering there. If a faculty member you are looking for is in the conference room, please do not disturb them. The staff can leave a message for them from you in their mailboxes if you need to contact them. The coffeepot and water facilities in the conference room are reserved for the use of the staff and faculty. You are free to make coffee at your desk area, but please do not dispose of coffee grounds in sinks or lavatories.

Fiscal Matters

Students who receive Department Scholarships should understand that their scholarship gets credited to their student account. Once you are enrolled, the cashier's office will clear your student account of any charges that you have made (e.g. textbooks that you may have charged to your account) and then send them a refund check (if money is still available). This usually occurs after the first couple weeks of school.

Pay day is the last working day of each month. Provided your paperwork with the New Employee Registration (NER) system, you will receive your first paycheck at the end of August. TAs and RAs are paid 9 months of effort (i.e., fall and spring semesters) over 10 months, from 8/1 through 5/31 of the following year. This is a relatively new policy from Human Resources (effective 2018-2019), so please ask questions if necessary. TAs are compensated with a combination of stipend and scholarship. Scholarship is paid at the start of a semester (it appears on your student account), and the stipend portion (as well as stipend for an RA) is paid monthly during the semester.

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The department will cover the student member pre-registration fee when attending a professional meeting (e.g. GSA, AGU; other meetings will be considered on a case-by-case basis). The present student member pre-registration fee for GSA is ~\$115 and for AGU ~\$200. An original receipt must be presented to the department fiscal officer for reimbursement following the meeting. If you have other expenses that will be covered by your advisor's grants, etc., the travel expense voucher reimbursement will be done on one voucher.

There is also a one-time departmental allotment of \$350 for graduate student travel expenses associated with attending a professional meeting where the student presents thesis research in either a poster or an oral session. The student must first request funding from an outside source (Graduate Professional Council on MU campus, GSA, etc.). Once this has been done, you should send a written request for the \$350 to the Director of Graduate Studies. In the request, include a description of the meeting you will be attending, a title and abstract for your presentation, and a listing of outside sources to which you have applied for travel support. Once approved, the Departmental fiscal officer will be notified. Once the trip has been taken, original receipts must be given to the fiscal officer, who will then file a travel expense voucher for reimbursement. All travel expenses (even those covered by your advisor's grants) must be submitted within 60 days of your return.

Some students will have research-related travel that is supported by grant funds. Any time a travel expense reimbursement is requested, original receipts must be turned in before reimbursement can be made. Please remember, when on your research trip, get an itemized receipt for all meals, lodging, parking, camping, etc., even though some may not be reimbursed at a later date. All lodging receipts should indicate the room rate for 1 person plus tax.

Have a great semester!

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IMPORTANT ADDENDUM (Specific to COVID-19 for Fall 2020)

Owing to the current health crisis, the MU Campus is operating under additional health/safety rules and policies for Fall 2020 (and likely, as of this writing, Spring 2021). These are summarized below (disclaimer: there may be some that were inadvertently not included, so please let us know). Also, the situation is fluid, and the policies may change with the conditions of the pandemic.

- Graduate Exams (defenses, comprehensive exams, and qualifying exams) are currently organized in a 'hybrid' model where the student and committee members may meet in person, but other interested parties (other graduate faculty and the broader public for the open presentations) will remotely attend. The Director of Graduate Studies will coordinate these. These are subject to change, as the situation dictates.
- All graduate students will need to complete a Return to Work form on eCompliance and receive formal approval before working on Campus. (Many have done this over the summer, already, but this is necessary for everyone, as you all will be teaching and conducting research in the building.)
- In addition to the usual student training (FERPA and Title IX), there are other specific trainings. Please make sure to log in and complete those:
 - <https://missouri.instructure.com>
 - <https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/hr/working-through-covid-19>
- Please remember that face (nose/mouth) coverings must be worn at all times in enclosed, public spaces (including shared offices). Also, please maintain at least 6-foot distance in classrooms, corridors, labs, and other spaces.
- IMPORTANT: In certain laboratory course settings (e.g., introductory geology labs), 6-foot spacing may not be possible. In these cases, the university allows shorter distances that follow stricter guidelines, including specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that will be provided by the department. If you are a GTA for one of these classes, please consult with the instructor for the course who will have more details and the PPE.
- Please remember to wash your hands thoroughly, cover your mouth firmly when you sneeze or cough (particularly if you are not wearing a mask at that moment). Also, please assess yourself (e.g., how do you feel? what is your temperature?) before arriving in the building.
- Once again, please KEEP AWARE of the potential for the COVID-19 situation to change – our policies and procedures will adjust accordingly.

Working together, we can improve our chances for a safe, healthy, and uneventful (albeit different) semester. Thanks!