

## 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/doctoral-program>

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

For M.S. Students: <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/masters/>

For Ph.D. Students: <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/doctoral/>

General Link to Grad School Policies and Procedures:

<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/>

Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines: <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/thesis-dissertation/dissertation-process/>

General Information for New Graduate Students:

<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/admissions/new-to-Mizzou/>

**Degree Audit System (currently for MS program, only):** 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 and which need to be completed. It is very useful. A similar degree audit system is planned for the doctoral programs at MU.

## **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: “U Got this 2: Sexual Violence Prevention Training”, “Building a Foundation: Discrimination Prevention and Title IX”, and “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)”.

Please make sure you have completed these – failure to do so can result in a hold on your student account that can prevent you from registering for classes. See <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/mizzous-mandatory-training-programs/> 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.

***Updated for 2021-2022:*** As required by MU’s Graduate School, each spring, graduate students are required to submit a self-assessment report of their academic progress. For academic year 2021-2022, this process will be performed using MyVita – more information will be provided by the department. In addition to the online information, students will upload additional department documents (these will be provided by the DGS).

Additionally, following expectations of the MU Graduate School, the department’s assessment will also 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. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment will result in termination of candidacy by the MU Graduate School, so please take heed.

Taking courses outside the Department of Geological Sciences: Graduate students are welcome to take courses outside the Department of Geological Sciences. As of the Fall, 2023 semester, in contrast to past policy, a flat tuition rate will be charged to all students for any courses they take no matter in what department or college the course is offered. That tuition rate will be whatever the tuition is in your home college. In other words, you will be charged the Arts and Science tuition rate no matter in what college your course is being offered.

## **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 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 *Building a Foundation: Discrimination Prevention and Title IX*.

This can be found at the following link: <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/mizzous-mandatory-training-programs/>.

## **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/>) or online via NetTutor (<https://learningcenter.missouri.edu/nettutor/>). Because discussions with your students may present a traffic/noise problem in graduate student offices, they should be conducted in an empty classroom, if possible.

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 in Room 101. 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.

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.

**Updated for 2021-2022:** The MU Graduate School expects Graduate Teaching Assistants to be reviewed for continued appointment by the department. The Department Chair will collect class evaluations from TAs and feedback from the instructor of the respective course at the end of each semester to review the TA performance and decide if the TA appointment will continue. For more information, please consult with the Department Chair.

## Department Communications

Many announcements will also be made using the departmental e-mail list serve: ([geobulletin-L@po.missouri.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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](#)).

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 ensure garbage is removed regularly. Trash and recycling bins are available in the hallways on all floors. We do have insects in this building, so please remove all food waste promptly to an outside trash bin. Questions and concerns should be directed to the department chair.

In accordance with MU Business Policy and Procedure Manual, Section 1:075, **pets "are not 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 is 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 **are 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.
- 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, watching NFL draft, etc..
- Students are not permitted to use the projection equipment in the computer lab unless they are teaching a course (i.e., a TA).

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. 9-month appointments for TAs and RAs are paid for 9 months of effort (i.e., fall and spring semesters) over either (a) 10 months, from 8/1 through 5/31, or (b) 12 months – this is selected by the student at the time of appointment/reappointment. Despite this pay schedule, 9-month appointments are eligible for additional summer compensation, if funds are available from, for example, the advisor's research funds. This is a relatively new policy from Human Resources (updated in 2021), 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.

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 \$500 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 \$500 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 25 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 (and year)!

## IMPORTANT ADDENDUM (Specific to COVID-19 for Fall 2021)

Owing to the resurgence of COVID-19 in Missouri (and elsewhere), the MU Campus is operating under additional health/safety rules and policies for Fall 2021 until further notice. You all should have received an email on July 29 from the MU Incident Command updating the policies -- 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.

- As of Aug. 2, 2021, all students, faculty, staff and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear masks in classrooms, as well as meeting spaces where social distancing is not possible. This temporary requirement will be reviewed by Sept. 15. For the remaining indoor spaces on campus, if you are not fully vaccinated, you are required to wear a mask. Even if you are fully vaccinated, the university recommends wearing a mask in these other indoor spaces, which is aligned with latest CDC recommendations.
- Students, faculty and staff are strongly urged to get vaccinated and upload an image of their COVID-19 vaccination records or cards. Students can easily upload their document to our Secure Document Upload in myZou. Faculty and staff are asked to provide information through our COVID Vaccine Uploader in myHR. If you have not already completed your vaccination, begin your vaccination wherever you are. If you get vaccinated with Moderna or Pfizer shots elsewhere, you can receive your second vaccination dose in Columbia. We will also have several special walk-in vaccination events on campus starting Aug. 5. Please see options and schedules. For students vaccinated outside of the United States, refer to these CDC recommendations about vaccines. Vaccinations will also be available to students at the Student Health Center during the fall semester.

Also, please keep these general guidelines in mind:

- Stay home when you are sick. Get tested if you have symptoms, even if you think you only have a cold or new/different allergy symptoms.
- Wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds.
- While in large groups or at events, don't assume everyone around you is vaccinated. If you are not vaccinated, you are required to wear a mask during indoor events. It is also recommended for those who are vaccinated.
- Students and supervisors for staff and faculty are still required to report positive cases. Find the forms to do so on the Show Me Renewal site (<https://renewal.missouri.edu/forms-and-policies/>).

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