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

*Master of Science Requirements*:  [http://geology.missouri.edu/degree/ms.html](http://geology.missouri.edu/degree/ms.html)

*Doctor of Philosophy Requirements*:  [http://geology.missouri.edu/degree/phd.html](http://geology.missouri.edu/degree/phd.html)

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

*For Master's Students*:  [http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/process/masters-process/](http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/process/masters-process/)
  and:  [http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-requirements/masters-grad-requirements.php](http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-requirements/masters-grad-requirements.php)

  and:  [http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-requirements/doctoral-grad-requirements.php](http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-requirements/doctoral-grad-requirements.php)

*General Link to Grad School Policies and Procedures*:  [http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/policies/](http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/policies/)


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. Additionally, a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better is required for graduation. For more information, please see the

In addition, the Department of Geological Sciences requires a minimum GPS of 3.2 for scholarship eligibility.

As required by MU’s Graduate Studies Program, each Spring, graduate students are required to submit a self-assessment report of their academic progress. The process includes an online report ([https://gsps.missouri.edu/](https://gsps.missouri.edu/)), as well as providing a signed hardcopy. This report is also reviewed by the student’s advisor. More details will be sent in the early Spring (typically early to mid March), and reports are typically due in mid April.
Graduate Student Exams (Including Defenses)

Following department policies, please notify 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).

MS and PhD students must provide at least one week’s 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 “gets the word.” 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).

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 (http://learningcenter.missouri.edu/). 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 pressures from students.

Do not provide GEOL1100 and GEOL 1200 review materials in the hallways and other open spaces of the building. This includes Room 13.

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.

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 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 surely 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.

Department Communications
Check the bulletin board next to Room 103 daily for general announcements. Announcements pertaining to individuals will be placed in mailboxes. 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.

Department Seminars

Time and place of talks by visiting seminar speakers will be posted on the bulletin board. 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 thieves, 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.
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. The telephone in each graduate office is only able to make local calls. If you need to make a long-distance call (even dialing for long distance operator assistance) you must use your own personal calling card or cell phone. For those of you who are TA’s, please give your students the phone number in your office to avoid any excessive calls to the main office. For calls directed to the main office, we will leave a message in your mailbox if the caller requests it. For your privacy, we do not give out your home (land line) or cell phone numbers to any persons calling the department for you (unless we feel it is an emergency call).

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.

**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.

Most equipment should be used within the building because all students and faculty share it.

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](http://doit.missouri.edu/services/internet-network/wireless-internet.html).
Departmental Office Facilities

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

TA’s commonly prepare examinations that must be duplicated for their classes. Bring 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; however, you will not receive your first paycheck until the end of September. TA's and RA’s are paid on a semester basis over nine months. You will receive four equal paychecks during the Fall Semester and five equal paychecks during the Winter Semester (i.e. less/month during Winter Semester).

The department will cover the student member pre-registration fee when attending a professional meeting (e.g. GSA, AGU). 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!