APPLY TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

ADMISSIONS

Our graduate students form a supportive and intellectually vibrant community. Each year we seek to add a small cohort of new members to that community. We use a collective and committee-based admissions process to select a group of students who will succeed here, and who will find this a hospitable place to pursue their goals. We carefully assess all aspects of each applicant's materials to inform our admissions decisions. We look for evidence that each applicant can:

- Exercise independent and creative thought;
- Conceive and execute an original research project;
- Communicate clearly, both orally and in writing;
- Manage the demands of a rigorous academic environment;
- Work well with others; and
- Contribute constructively to our intellectual community.

We seek to admit and recruit graduate program applicants from all backgrounds and nations, and we are committed to increasing the representation of underrepresented minorities. We coordinate closely with the Graduate School's recruitment and retention programs, including the Graduate Opportunities & Minority Achievement Program (GOMAP).

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

- Success in the department requires that each student work closely with multiple faculty mentors. To ensure that each student will be effectively supervised, admission to the program requires the support of multiple faculty members. Accordingly, interested students are strongly encouraged to read the published work of relevant faculty members prior to submitting an application. Students should then be able to use their application to explain how their plans for graduate study fit with the current work of these faculty members.

- Students who seek admission directly into the Ph.D. program should have either completed an M.A. in geography or done analogous post-baccalaureate work. Students who lack a geography M.A. and wish to enter the Ph.D. program should indicate that they wish to do so. Such applicants should upload all or most of their M.A. thesis in the applicant portal in the supplemental forms section.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The online admissions website for the residential M.A. and Ph.D. programs application opens annually on August 1 and closes on December 15 for both U.S. and international applicants. All application materials must be received by the weekday closest to December 15 to be considered for autumn quarter admission in the following year. Please review the UW Graduate Admissions policies and procedures as well.

It is important to read all directions carefully before proceeding. You may wish to print out these instructions and keep them for reference. If you have questions after reading the instructions, contact Nell Gross, Director of Academic Services (ngross@uw.edu, (206) 543-3246).

1. GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION

Complete the online Graduate School Application. All of the following application materials will be submitted through this online application platform.
2. PERSONAL STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC DIRECTION & RESEARCH INTERESTS

Please submit an essay (3 pages maximum) describing your intended academic direction and research interests. Also, please explain how you envision pursuing those interests in the UW Department of Geography, with reference to at least two faculty members you'd like to work with.

3. CURRICULUM VITAE OR RESUME

This is optional, but highly recommended.

4. PERSONAL HISTORY

We actively seek diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and cultural experiences in our graduate program. To help us achieve this diversity, it would help us if you could identify any factors in your life which you feel will help broaden our graduate program. These may include: economic and educational disadvantages, cultural awareness, overcoming personal adversity, and leadership awards.

5. THREE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

These letters of recommendation will preferably come from academic referees. You will be asked to enter the names and contact information (affiliation, email, phone) in the recommendation section of the online Graduate School Application. This activates a request for a letter of recommendation to be posted online by your referees. These letters should assess your probable success in our graduate program, based as much as possible on your prior academic achievement, and discuss your ability to contribute to an intellectual community.

6. GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION (GRE) SCORES

Direct ETC to send the scores to Institution Code 4854, and Geography Department Code 2203. You may post unofficial score reports, but if you are admitted into our graduate program you will need to have ETS send the Graduate School an official score report before you can register.

For students without M.A. degrees, we accept scores for GREs taken within the past 5 years (i.e., for tests taken no earlier than 5 years before our December 15 deadline). For Autumn 2014 admissions, for example, with its Dec. 15, 2013, deadline, we would accept scores for exams taken on or after Dec. 15, 2008. Applicants to the doctoral program who have earned an M.A. within the past 3 years may submit the GRE scores used for admission to the graduate program that granted them their M.A., provided the GRE was taken within the last 10 years.

7. TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts from all institutions from which degrees were earned are required. Updated unofficial versions of all transcripts from prior college work should be uploaded as a PDF to the Graduate School website as part of the application (scanned copies that have been converted to a PDF are acceptable if a digital version is not available from the institution). International applicants must post transcripts translated into English. All transcripts submitted should include a grading legend.

8. WRITING SAMPLE

Applicants to our M.A. program are encouraged, but not required, to submit an example of their academic writing. Applicants to our doctoral program are required to submit either a published paper or a paper from a graduate seminar as part of their application. Please post this work online, in the Writing Sample section of the application.

9. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Prospective graduate students from foreign countries are expected to meet the same academic and residence requirements as the U.S. students, including regular attendance in required courses and seminars. All students are expected to have an adequate command of written and spoken English. If your English language competency is not sufficient, you will not be able to participate fully in class meetings and discussions, take notes, or read with sufficient proficiency. Therefore, every applicant whose primary language is not English must demonstrate English language proficiency. Proficiency can be demonstrated in one of the following four ways:
1. A bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited institution in the United States or from an institution in Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, or the United Kingdom.

2. Documentation verifying that the applicant’s undergraduate degree is from an institution (in a country other than those listed in #1 above) where all instruction is in English.

3. A minimum English language proficiency test score of:
   1. 92 on the TOEFLiBT
   2. 237 on the TOEFLC
   3. 580 on the TOEFL
   4. 90 on the MLT

4. If an applicant is admitted with an English proficiency test score lower than the minimum scores (listed in #3 above) and in the range of scores listed below, the student will be required upon matriculation to take designated Academic English Program (AEP) courses through UW English Language Programs.
   1. 61-91 TOEFLiBT
   2. 173-236 TOEFLC
   3. 500-579 TOEFL
   4. 80-89 MLT
   5. 50-64 PTE

10. APPLICATION FEE

   An application fee, payable online, is required to complete your application.

NOTIFICATION OF ADMISSION

We will endeavor to announce admissions decisions by mid-February via an e-mail from the department. Once admitted, you will be directed to your online “application status page” to let us know if you intend to enter our program. The sooner you let us know your intent, the better. This is a non-binding statement of intent. Later in the spring you will have to pay an enrollment deposit to confirm that you are actually attending. If you do accept another offer, please either e-mail us with your decision or record your decision in the online “application status page.” That way, we can send you an online survey to help us understand what factors figure into students’ decisions about which graduate program to attend.

If you are offered admission, please return to your online application via the University of Washington Graduate School Admissions page to indicate your intent to enroll and read important information on next steps in order to register for classes, establish your UW NetID, requirements for English proficiency and instructions to request visa application.

FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

All applicants will be automatically considered for departmental funding; no additional funding application forms are required. Funding offers will go out some weeks after the admissions decisions are announced—sometimes not until around April 15, depending on many variables, so be patient and don’t give up on us. If you haven’t heard about funding from us by April 15, please check with us before accepting another offer.

CONTACT US

Prof. Suzanne Withers, Graduate Program Director (swithers@uw.edu)
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