GRADUATE ADMISSIONS

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ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

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.

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.

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. These include:

GOMAP (Graduate Opportunities & Minority Achievement Program)

Students who seek admission into the post-Master's 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 post-Master's program should indicate that they wish to enter the PhD (that is, post-MA) program. Such applicants should upload all or most of their MA thesis in the applicant portal in the supplemental forms section.

GRADUATE APPLICATION

(Note: The MGIS program is administered through UW Continuum College, and has a separate, stand-alone admissions cycle and process.)

The online admissions site for the residential MA & PhD 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 December 15 to be considered for Autumn Quarter admission for the following year.

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 James Baginski...
at jbag@uw.edu, or by phone at (206) 543-3246.

For an overview of UW Graduate Admissions policies and procedures, please see

http://www.grad.washington.edu/admissions/index.htm

Students should ensure that the following items are submitted by December 15. All application components must be posted online. These include:

1. Graduate School Application:

https://www.grad.washington.edu/applForAdmiss/

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

3. Curriculum Vitae or resume. (optional, but highly recommended) 4. Personal History (optional). Note: Only US citizens who qualify for diversity fellowships should submit this personal history. This is an optional item.

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, on this form as well as in your personal history, 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, preferably from academic referees. You will be asked to enter the names and contact information (affiliation, email, phone) on the online Graduate School recommendation form, and thus activate 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 scores. Direct ETS to send the scores to institution code 4854, and Geography Dept. code 2203. You may also post unofficial score reports, but if you are admitted to our graduate program you will need to have ETS send the Graduate School an official score report before you can register. For students without MA degrees, we accept scores for GREs taken within the past five years (that is, for tests taken no earlier than five years before our December 15 deadline. Thus, for Autumn '14 admissions for example, with its December 15, 2013 deadline, we accept scores for exams taken on or after December 15, 2008. Post-Master's applicants who have earned an MA within the past three years may submit the GRE scores used for admission to the graduate program which granted them their MA, provided the GRE was taken within the past ten years.

7. Transcripts from all institutions from which degrees were earned. Updated unofficial versions of all transcripts from prior college work should be uploaded to the Graduate School website as part of the application (obtain a PDF file of the transcript from the university, or scan the transcript and then submit it via the electronic application as a PDF). International applicants must post transcripts translated into English. All transcripts submitted should include a grading legend.

No official (sealed) transcripts should be submitted in hard copy until you are admitted into our graduate program.

If you are offered admission, please return to the application at the link below to indicate your intention to attend and read important information on next steps in order to enroll in classes, establish your UW NetID, requirements for English proficiency and instructions to request visa application.

University of Washington Graduate School Admissions
uwgrad@u.washington.edu

Applicants with degrees from the University of Washington may upload a pdf copy of their UW transcript as part of their application. PDF copies of their transcripts are available from MyUW. For UW graduates, no
official paper copies are needed.

8. Writing Sample. Master's applicants (that is, students without an MA degree either already earned or in-progress), are encouraged, but not required, to submit an example of their academic writing. Post-masters applicants (that is, applicants who either already have an MA or will have one before they join our doctoral program) must post a paper from a graduate seminar or a published paper. 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 native 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:
   - 92 on the TOEFLiBT
   - 237 on the TOEFLC
   - 580 on the TOEFL
   - 90 on the MLT

   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.
   - 61-91 TOEFLiBT
   - 173-236 TOEFLC
   - 500-579 TOEFL
   - 80-89 MLT
   - 50-64 PTE.

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

11. 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.

12. 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.