PH.D. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Doctoral Degree Program enables students to complete a research project of notable scope and originality that will make a significant contribution to the discipline of geography and related fields. Advanced coursework provides an opportunity to gain familiarity with current knowledge in the student’s areas of specialization. Student expertise in their chosen sub-fields is ensured through the Preliminary Review and General Examination. Students may choose to write either a dissertation or three papers of publishable quality. All such research efforts are expected to meet high standards of research design and data analysis.

Students in this program are supervised by a committee throughout the course of their graduate work. At different points in the program, the committee has different roles. There are a preliminary committee, a doctoral supervisory committee, and a reading committee.

Current graduate students can find doctoral degree procedures and policies detailed on the Department of Geography Graduate Student Resources Canvas page.

PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

Completion of all work for the doctoral degree must occur within 10 years. This includes quarters spent On-Leave or Out of Status as well as applicable work from the master’s degree from the UW or a master’s degree from another institution, if applied toward one year of resident study. A student must satisfy the requirements that are in force at the time the degree is to be awarded.

Current students may assess their progress towards these requirements by conducting a degree audit in MyPlan.

1. REQUIRED COURSES

- GEOG 500: Contemporary Geographic Thought.
- GEOG 511: Contemporary Research Design in Geography, or another approved social science research design course from another department—for more information, please consult the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- One methods course, from among the following:
  - GEOG 525: Advanced Qualitative Methods in Geography
  - GEOG 526: Advanced Quantitative Methods in Geography
  - GEOG 560: GIS Analysis
  - GEOG 561: Urban GIS
  - GEOG 562: Coastal GIS
  - GEOG 564: GIS Decision Support
- Satisfactory completion of at least three quarters of GEOG 598: Geography Colloquium.
- Two departmental research seminars number 500 or above. This does not include GEOG 502 or GEOG 513.

2. CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

- Completion of 90 credits.
- At least 60 of these credits should be at the University of Washington (including 27 GEOG 800 credits).
- With the approval of the degree-granting unit, an appropriate master's degree from an accredited institution may substitute for 30 credits of enrollment. Contact your faculty adviser to request this approval.
- Student must achieve a grade of at least 3.0 in all departmental courses, and a grade of 2.7 in all related courses used to satisfy degree requirements. An overall grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained.
to remain in the program and is required for a graduate degree at the university.

3. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PRELIMINARY REVIEW

4. CREDITABLE PASSAGE OF THE GENERAL EXAMINATION

- Registration as a graduate student is required the quarter the exam is taken and candidacy is conferred.
- Numerical grades must be received in at least 18 quarter credits of course work taken at the UW prior to scheduling the General Examination. The Graduate School accepts numerical grades in approved 400-level courses accepted as part of the major, and in all 500-level courses.

5. DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

- Students who pass the General Examination must prepare a dissertation proposal for review by the Supervisory Committee. The proposal must:
  - Outline a clear research question;
  - Situate that question within relevant literature
  - Outline a methodological strategy for collecting the necessary data
  - Describe a process for analyzing that data; and
  - Include a timeline for completion of the work.
- The proposal is reviewed during a meeting, commonly termed the "proposal defense," with the student and their Supervisory Committee. The GSR is not required to attend the proposal defense.
- Failure of the student to obtain approval for the Ph.D. dissertation proposal within two years of advancement to candidacy will normally result in a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School that the student be terminated from the Ph.D. program in Geography.

6. DISSERTATION

- Preparation of, and acceptance by, the Dean of the Graduate School of a dissertation (or three high-quality research papers) that is a significant contribution to knowledge and clearly indicates training in research.
- Credit for the dissertation ordinarily should be at least one-third of the total credit.
- The Candidate must register for a minimum of 27 credits of dissertation over a period of at least three quarters.
  - At least one of these quarters must come after the student passes the General Examination.
- With the exception of summer quarter, students are limited to a maximum of 10 credits per quarter of GEOG 800 Doctoral Dissertation.

7. CREDITABLE PASSAGE OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION

- This is also known as the Dissertation Defense.
- The final examination is typically devoted to the defense of the dissertation and the field with which it is concerned.
- The General and Final Examinations cannot be scheduled during the same quarter.
- Registration as a graduate student, for at least 2 credits, is required the quarter the exam is taken and the degree is conferred.

8. COMPETENCY IN LANGUAGE OR FIELD OF CONCENTRATION

- Student should demonstrate evidence of reading competence in a foreign language or a sound level of competence in a cognate field of concentration, as determined by the student's Supervisory Committee.

9. SCHOLARLY ARTICLE SUBMISSION

- Submission of a scholarly article to a professionally-reviewed academic journal or an application for research support from an external agency, such as the National Science Foundation.
- The publication may be jointly-authored with a faculty member or with another graduate student.

SUGGESTED PH.D. TIMETABLE

YEAR 1

FALL
• Determine appropriate class(es) to take in addition to GEOG 500 (5 credits) and 598 (1 credit).
• Consult with relevant faculty about possible research interests.

WINTER
• Determine faculty advisor, and confirm this with Graduate Program Coordinator.
• Begin discussions about areas of sub-disciplinary interest, possible dissertation topics, and format of Preliminary Review with advisor and relevant other faculty.
• Discuss future coursework with advisor, including appropriate methods courses.

SPRING
• Continue coursework in consultation with advisor.
• Schedule and complete Preliminary Review.
• Research possible opportunities for acquiring funding for dissertation research.

YEAR 2

FALL
• Continue coursework in consultation with advisor.
• Formalize composition of the Doctoral Supervisory Committee.
• Begin planning and preparation for General Examination.
• Consider applying for funding for dissertation research.

WINTER AND SPRING
• Continue coursework, as necessary. Enroll in GEOG 800 Doctoral Dissertation credits if advisable.
• Schedule and complete General Examination.
• Begin preparation for dissertation proposal defense.
• Schedule and complete dissertation proposal defense.

YEARS 3 AND 4
• Schedule and complete dissertation proposal defense as early as possible.
• Enroll in GEOG 800 Doctoral Dissertation credits, as necessary.
• As possible, submit paper(s) to academic journals for publication.
• Research, write, and defend dissertation.