



Department of

GEOLOGY & GEOPHYSICS

COLLEGE OF GEOSCIENCES

Department Graduate Handbook

Goals and Deadlines for Degree Completion

Master Students **

- Meet with your Faculty Advisor and select your Graduate Committee
 - Chair plus one member from the G&G Department
 - One member from outside of the G&G Department
- Degree Plan due by the **end of the second semester**
 - The Graduate and Professional School (GPS) will place a degree plan hold on your account before preregistration during your second semester, so you will not be able to register for the next semester until a degree plan is submitted to GPS
- Proposal Due by the **end of the second semester**
- Defense and Thesis completed by the end of the fourth semester

PhD Students **

- Meet with your Faculty Advisor and select your Graduate Committee
 - Chair plus two members from the G&G Department
 - One member from outside of the G&G Department
- Degree Plan due by the **end of the third semester**
 - GPS will place a degree plan hold on your account before preregistration during your third semester, so you will not be able to register for the next semester until a degree plan is submitted to GPS
- Proposal and Preliminary exam completed by the **end of the fourth semester**
- Admission to Candidacy
 - Completed all formal coursework on the Degree Plan
 - Achieve a GPA of 3.0 or greater
 - Submitted an approved Proposal
 - Passed the Preliminary Exam
 - Meet residency requirements
 - Admission to Candidacy must be met before student can Defend
- Final Exam (Defense) and Dissertation completed by the eighth semester
 - Ten semesters if the student does not have a master's degree when admitted to the PhD program

** To assist with student success, the department requires you to meet with your Academic Advisor. An advising hold will be placed on your account the 20th class day each Fall and Spring semester. After you receive an email regarding this hold, make an advising appointment at Navigate ([https:// https://tamu.campus.eab.com/pal/s1PF8tqdc1](https://tamu.campus.eab.com/pal/s1PF8tqdc1)) to discuss progress towards your degree.

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Welcome

Welcome to Texas A&M University! The College of Geosciences, along with the Department of Geology and Geophysics, are pleased you are earning your post graduate degree with us!

This handbook is designed for graduate students in the Department of Geology and Geophysics, provides helpful tips regarding Departmental guidelines, deadlines, and such about our program. Furthermore, students are expected to be familiar with all University and College of Geoscience requirements and rules as well as their deadlines and grade requirements.

Aggie Code of Honor-

An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do!

The Aggie Code of Honor is an effort to unify the aims of all Texas A&M men and women toward a high code of ethics and personal dignity. For most, living under this code will be no problem, as it asks nothing of a person that is beyond reason. It calls for honesty and integrity which are characteristics that Aggies have always exemplified. The Aggie Code of Honor functions as a symbol to all Aggies and promotes understanding and loyalty to truth and confidence in each other.

Graduate Programs in Geology and Geophysics

Graduate Programs in Geology and Geophysics

The Department of Geology and Geophysics at Texas A&M University strives for a balanced program of research, undergraduate and graduate teaching, and outreach and service. With programs in both geology and geophysics, students have the opportunity to explore the basic principles of geology with a significant focus on research investigations, or to dive into geophysics, an area of scientific inquiry that deals with the physical state of the planets and with the dynamic physical processes that act on and within the planets.

Degrees in Geology

Graduate work in geology is offered at both the Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) levels. Programs are designed to provide the student with an understanding of the fundamentals of geology and related disciplines. Research investigations comprise a significant part of each program. **The M.S. degree is granted as thesis option only.** Opportunities for research at both the M.S. and Ph.D. levels are available in petroleum geology, sedimentology and stratigraphy, structural geology, tectonophysics, deep crust and mantle dynamics, isotope geochemistry, paleoclimate and climate change, paleobiology and paleoecology, hydrogeology and environmental geology and geochemistry.

Degrees in Geophysics

The degrees of Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) are offered in geophysics. Geophysics includes all areas of scientific inquiry that deal with the interpretation of largely indirect observations concerning the physical state of the interior and dynamic physical processes that act within the planets. Sedimentary basins, petroleum systems, tectonically active zones, volcanic regions, the seafloor, the deep interior and the core, and the near-surface critical zone all lie within the province of the geophysicist. To work effectively in any of these areas requires considerable depth and breadth understanding of both physical and geological principles as well as proficiency in applied mathematics and computational techniques. Thorough undergraduate training in an earth or physical science is ordinarily regarded as a necessary prerequisite for advanced study.

Master of Science in Geology or Geophysics

The Master of Science (MS) curriculum is designed to develop new understanding through research and creativity.

Steps to Fulfill Master's Degree Requirements:

1. Meet with your faculty advisor to plan your course of study for the first semester **before first semester registration**. Your planned course of study must be approved by your faculty advisor.
2. Establish an advisory committee prior to the second semester. Submit a Degree Plan by the end of the second semester using <https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu>. The degree plan must be approved by your academic advisor, advisory committee, the graduate director, and the Graduate and Professional School (GPS).
3. Submit your thesis proposal GPS. This required at the end of the first year. The proposal needs approval via DocuSign (see chart on page 7 for DocuSign information and initiation) from your advisory committee, department head, and GPS.
4. Apply for degree and pay graduation fee during the first week of the final semester. See the Grad Students tab in your Howdy portal for information on dates and deadlines.
5. Well before submitting a request to schedule the final examination, check to be sure degree program and advisory committee are up to date, and all ELP requirements (if applicable) and coursework are complete.
6. Complete residence requirement, if applicable, before or during final semester. This needs to be approved by GPS.
7. Submit a request to schedule the final examination to GPS using DocuSign (see chart below-page 7). This must be received by GPS at least 10 working days before the scheduled exam. See the GPS calendar deadlines.
8. Successfully complete the final examination, and the Report of the Final Examination Form should be submitted to GPS via DocuSign (see chart on page 7) within 10 days following the exam. This must be approved by the advisory committee and GPS.
9. Upload one approved final copy of thesis as a single PDF file, and submit signed approval form to GPS at <http://ogaps.tamu.edu>.
10. Graduation! Arrange for cap and gown and visit <http://graduation.tamu.edu> for more information.

DocuSign Form	Email Addresses needed for DocuSign	Who initiates form in DocuSign	Notes
Proposal Approval	-Academic Advisor -All Committee members -Dept. Head	Student	
Preliminary Exam Checklist and Report	-Academic Advisor -All Committee members -Dept. Head	Student	
Request for Final Examination	-Academic Advisor -Committee Chair - Dept. Head	Student	Must be submitted at least 10 working days in advance of Defense date
Report of Final Examination (Defense)	-All Committee members	Graduate and Professional School	**Form is generated in DocuSign after the <i>Request for Final Examination</i> is approved by GPS
Written Thesis/ Dissertation Approval	-Academic Advisor -All Committee Members - Dept. Head	Student	
Thesis/ Dissertation Copyright Availability	-Committee Chair	Student	

Note: Only use @tam.u.edu emails for **all** committee members, academic advisor, and Department Head. For example, do not @geos.tamu.edu. If you have any non-TAMU committee members, you should also use their @tam.u.edu email address.

Note: When filling out the powerform in DocuSign, “Staff Graduate Advisor” or “Graduate Program Assistant” is the G&G Graduate Academic Advisor.

Note: If information is missing from the powerform (e.g., you forgot to list your co-chair), or any information is incorrect (e.g. incorrect Thesis title), the form will be rejected/cancelled and will need to be reinitiated by the student.

Note: The DocuSign app is the easiest way to track and sign forms.

Note: Students can [track the progress](#) of any form in DocuSign at any time. It is the student’s responsibility to track the form, not the Academic Advisor.

Advisory Committee Information

If the chair of the student's advisory committee is unavailable for an extended time in any academic period during which the student is involved in research activities such as 691, the student may request, in writing, that the department head appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period.

The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, and the thesis and the final examination. In addition, the committee as a group and as individual members are responsible for advising the student on academic matters, and in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to GPS. Student rules can be found online at <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/>; Scholastic Deficiency/Probation information can be found in section 12.

The committee members' approval on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign *en masse*.

Degree Plan

The student's advisory committee, in consultation with the student, will develop the proposed degree plan. **The degree plan must be completed and filed with GPS prior to the end of the second semester.**

A student should submit the degree plan using the online [Document Processing Submission System](#).

A student submitting a proposed degree plan for a Master of Science degree should designate on the official degree plan the appropriate program option, i.e. Geology or Geophysics.

Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisory committee to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student's Request for Final Examination or Request for Final Examination Exemption is approved by the GPS.

*The Master of Science in Geology requires 2 credits of GEOL/GEOP 681, and 21-24 hours of graded course work, and at least 8 hours of 691 research. No more than 6 hours of 300-400 level undergraduate credit can be applied to the Degree Plan.

Credit Requirement

Geology & Geophysics graduate students can place 32-34 semester credit hours of approved courses and research required for the Master of Science on their degree plan.

Ordinarily the student will devote the major portion of his or her time to work in one or two closely related fields. Other work will be in supporting fields of interest.

Transfer of Credit

A student who has earned 12 hours of graduate credit in residence at Texas A&M University may be authorized to transfer courses in excess of the limits prescribed below upon the advice of the advisory committee and with the approval of the Graduate and Professional School.

Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater may be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Otherwise, the limitations stated in the following section apply. **Coursework in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit.** Courses appearing on the degree plan with grades of D, F or U may not be absolved by transfer work. Credit for thesis research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours or equated to semester credit hours. An official transcript from the university at which the transfer coursework was taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Courses used toward a completed degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPR.

Students are advised to check additional university rules on "Limitations on the Use of Transfer, Extension and Certain Other Courses." Exceptions will be permitted only in unusual cases and when petitioned by the student's advisory committee and approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

*Generally, the Department of Geology and Geophysics will consider taking up to six hours of transfer credits

Thesis

An acceptable thesis is required for the Master of Science degree. The finished work must reflect a comprehensive understanding of the pertinent literature and express in clear English, the problem(s) for study, the method, and the significance and results of the student's original research. Guidelines for the preparation of the thesis are available in the *Thesis Manual*, which is available online at the Graduate and Professional School website.

After successful defense and approval by the student's advisory committee and the head of the department, the student must submit his/her thesis in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file must be uploaded to the Graduate and Professional School website. Additionally, a DocuSign approval form needs to be submitted (see Chart 1).

Deadline dates for submitting the thesis are announced each semester or summer term in the "GPS Calendar" (see Time Limit statement).

See the Grad Students Tab on your Howdy Portal for dates and deadlines.

Each student who submits a document for review is assessed a one-time thesis/dissertation processing fee through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After commencement, theses and dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

A thesis that is deemed unacceptable by the Graduate and Professional School because of excessive corrections will be returned to the student's department head. The manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire review process must begin again. All original submittal deadlines must be met during the re-submittal process to graduate that semester.

Thesis Proposal

For the Master of Science degree, the student must prepare a thesis proposal for approval by the advisory committee and the head of the department. This proposal must be submitted to GPS by the end of the first full year of study or at least 20 working days prior to the submission of the request for the final examination, whichever is earlier.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at (979) 458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained on the [Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety](#) website.

Final Examination/Thesis Defense

A student must pass a final examination by dates announced each semester or summer term in the GPS Calendar. **The Graduate and Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellation.** To be eligible to take the final examination, a student's GPR must be **at least 3.000 for courses on the degree plan and for all courses completed at Texas A&M which are eligible to be applied to a graduate degree, and there must be no unabsolved grades of D, F or U for any course listed on the degree plan.** To absolve a deficient grade, the student must repeat the course at Texas A&M University and achieve a grade of B or better. All coursework on the degree plan must have been completed with the exception of those hours for which the student is registered. Additionally, all English Language Proficiency requirements must be satisfied prior to scheduling the examination. An approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Graduate and Professional School according to published deadlines.

A request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted **GPS a minimum of 10 working days in advance** of the scheduled date for the examination. Examinations which are not completed and reported as satisfactory to GPS within 10 working days of the scheduled examination date will be recorded as failures. A student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the final examination for the master's degree, and that must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (summer terms are excluded).

The final oral examination covers the thesis and all work taken on the degree plan and at the option of the committee may also contain a written component. The final examination may not be administered before the thesis is available to all members of the student's advisory committee in substantially final form, and all members have had adequate time to review the document. Generally speaking, all master student's thesis are due to committee members **one month before the thesis defense.** The examination is conducted by the student's advisory committee as finally constituted. A student must be registered in the University in the semester or summer term in which the final examination is taken. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the committee chair, attend final examinations for advanced degrees. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam.

Additional Requirements

Residence

In partial fulfillment of the residence requirement for the degree of Master of Science, the student must complete 9 resident credit hours during one regular semester or one 10-week

summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. Upon recommendation of the student's advisory committee, and department head, and with approval of the GPS, a student may be granted exemption from this requirement. Such a petition; however, must be approved prior to the student's registration for the final 9 credit hours of required coursework.

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, the student is required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of his/her employment to the GPS.

See [Residence Requirements](#).

Continuous Registration

A student in the Master of Science program who has completed all coursework on his/her degree plan other than 691 (research) is required to be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed. See [Continuous Registration Requirements](#).

Time Limit

All degree requirements must be completed within a period of seven consecutive years for the degree to be granted. A course will be considered valid until seven years after the end of the semester in which it is taken. Graduate credit for coursework which is more than seven calendar years old at the time of the final examination (oral or written) may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

A student must have the final corrected version of the thesis cleared by the GPS no later than one year after the final examination, or within the seven-year time limit, whichever occurs first. Failure to do so will result in the degree not being awarded.

Foreign Languages

No specific language requirement exists for the Master of Science degree.

Application for Degree

For information on applying for your degree, please visit the [Graduation](#) section.

Doctor of Philosophy in Geology or Geophysics

Work leading to the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** is designed to give the candidate a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of geology or geophysics and training in methods of research. The final basis for granting the degree shall be the candidate's grasp of the subject matter of a broad field of study and a demonstrated ability to do independent research. In addition, the candidate must have acquired the ability to express thoughts clearly and forcefully in both oral and written languages. The degree is not granted solely for the completion of coursework, residence and technical requirements, although these must be met.

For a student who has completed a master's degree at a U.S. or approved international institution, a minimum of 64 hours is required on the degree plan for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. For a student who has completed a baccalaureate degree but not a master's degree, a minimum of 96 hours is required on the degree plan for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

For PhD geophysics students, the following four foundational courses are recommended and may be required by your advisory committee: Geomechanics (GEOP 611), Earthquake Seismology (GEOP 652), Physics of the Earth's Interior (GEOP 660), Principles of Geodynamics (GEOP 666).

Steps to Fulfill Doctoral Degree Requirements

1. Meet with the graduate director or your faculty chair to plan course of study for the first semester **before** first semester registration. Your course of study must be approved by your advisor.
2. Establish an advisory committee during your second semester. Submit a Degree Plan by the end of your third semester. The Degree Plan must be approved by your advisory committee, department head, and the Graduate and Professional School (GPS), and submitted **prior to the end of your third semester**.
3. If applicable, complete the English Language Proficiency requirements and coursework detailed on the Degree Plan **before the preliminary examination**.
4. Submit your proposal for dissertation or record of study to the Graduate and Professional School **before you take your preliminary exam**. This must be initiated by the student using the DocuSign system (see page 7 for DocuSign flow chart) and approved by your advisory committee, department head, and GPS.
5. Seek out the requirements specified by our advisory committee for completing the preliminary examination, then complete the preliminary examination. The preliminary examination results are typically submitted to GPS within the first two years of Ph.D.
6. Complete residence requirement, if applicable, before submitting request to schedule the final oral examination. This needs to be approved by GPS.

7. During the first week of the final semester, apply for degree and pay graduation fees.
8. Submit a request to schedule the final oral examination to GPS using DocuSign (see chart above-page 7). This must be received by GPS at least 10 working days before the scheduled exam. This needs to be approved by your advisory committee, the department head, and GPS. See the GPS calendar deadlines.
9. Successfully complete the final examination. The Report of the Final Examination Form should be initiated by the student in the DocuSign system (see page 7 for DocuSign flow chart) within 10 days following the exam. This needs approval by your advisory committee, the department head, and GPS.
10. Upload one approved final copy of the dissertation or record of study as a single pdf file to Vireo at etd.tamu.edu. Your advisory committee, department head, and Graduate and Professional School must approve this final copy.
11. Submit a signed Thesis/Dissertation Approval form and the Copyright and Availability form to GPS (<https://grad.tamu.edu/#>). Be sure to see the GPS calendar for important deadlines.
12. Graduate! Arrange for your cap and gown as well. For more information, visit <http://graduation.tamu.edu>.

*Once formal coursework is complete, you must be continuously registered until all degree requirements have been met. See [Continuous Registration Requirements](#).

* *The Doctor of Philosophy in Geology requires 2 credits of [GEOL/GEOP 681](#). There are no other course requirements, although PhD Geophysics students are recommended to take the four foundational classes listed on page 15.*

Program Requirements

Student's Advisory Committee

After receiving admission to the graduate program and enrolling, the student should form an advisory committee. When accepted, a faculty member has already agreed to be the chair of the student's advisory committee. The student's advisory committee will consist of **no fewer than four members of the approved graduate faculty** which can be found on the OGAPS website. Along with the student's faculty chair, **at least two or more of the members must have an appointment with Geology and Geophysics**. At least one appointment must be outside of the department of Geology & Geophysics. In other words, the committee should consist of 3 members within our department and one member outside of the Department of Geology and Geophysics. The student should contact the faculty chair, head of the department, or graduate director if any difficulties are encountered in forming an advisory committee.

The chair, in consultation with the student, should work together to select the advisory

committee. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other Texas A&M University graduate faculty members located off-campus may serve as a member.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student's academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head may request in writing to the Associate Provost for GPS that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student's advisory committee without a co-chair for up to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

The committee members' signatures on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign *en masse*. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's research and dissertation or record of study, has the responsibility for calling all meetings of the committee. The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, the preliminary examination, the dissertation or record of study, and the final examination. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the GPS.

Degree Plan

The student's advisory committee will evaluate the student's previous education and degree objectives. The committee, in consultation with the student, will develop a proposed degree plan and outline a research problem which, when completed, as indicated by the dissertation, will constitute the basic requirements for the degree. **The degree plan must be filed with the GPS prior to the deadline which is at the end of the third semester.**

This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website <http://ogsdpss.tamu.edu>. A minimum of 64 hours is required on the degree plan for the Doctor of Philosophy for a student who has completed a master's degree at a U.S. or approved international institution. A student who has completed a baccalaureate degree but not a master's degree will be required to complete a 96-hour degree plan. A field of study may be primarily in one department or in a combination of departments. A degree plan must carry a reasonable amount of 691 (research) hours.

Additional coursework may be added by petition to the approved degree plan by the student's advisory committee if it is deemed necessary to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student's Request for Final Examination is approved by the GPS.

*Two 1 hour department seminars need to be placed on the degree plan (GEOL/GEOP 681)

Transfer of Credit

Courses for which transfer credits are sought must have been completed with a grade of B or greater and must be approved by the student's advisory committee and the GPS. These courses must not have been used previously for another degree. Except for officially approved cooperative doctoral programs, credit for thesis or dissertation research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for "internship" coursework in any form is not transferable. Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater will be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Credit for coursework taken by extension is not transferable.

Coursework in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit.

Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours, or equated to semester credit hours.

Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the GPS.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPR. An official transcript from the university at which transfer courses are taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

*Generally, the Department of Geology and Geophysics will consider taking up to six hours of transfer credits

Research Proposal

The general field of research to be used for the dissertation should be agreed on by the student and the advisory committee at their first meeting, as a basis for selecting the proper courses to support the proposed research.

As soon thereafter as the research project can be outlined in reasonable detail, the dissertation research proposal should be completed. The research proposal should be approved at a meeting of the student's advisory committee, at which time the feasibility of the proposed research and

the adequacy of available facilities should be reviewed. The approved proposal, signed by all members of the student's advisory committee, and the head of the department, must be submitted to the GPS **before the preliminary exam is taken.**

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at (979) 458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained on the website <http://rcb.tamu.edu>.

Examinations

Preliminary Examination

The student's major department and his or her advisory committee may require qualifying, cumulative or other types of examinations at any time deemed desirable. These examinations are entirely at the discretion of the department and the student's advisory committee.

The preliminary examination is required. The preliminary examination for a doctoral student shall be given no earlier than a date at which the student is within 6 credit hours of completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan (i.e., all coursework on the degree plan except 681 and 691 courses). The student is strongly encouraged to complete the Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the fourth semester, near the completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan. The GPS must receive the results of the preliminary examination at least 14 weeks prior to the final examination date. The examination shall be oral and written unless otherwise recommended by the student's advisory committee and approved by the GPS. The written part of the examination will cover all fields of study included in the student's degree plan. Each member of the advisory committee is responsible for administering a written examination in his or her particular field, **unless he or she chooses to waive participation in this part of the examination.** Two or more members of the advisory committee may give a joint written examination. One or more members may require a student to take a departmental examination to supplement or replace a written examination. Each written examination must be completed and reported as satisfactory to the chair of the advisory committee before the oral portion of the examination may be held. In case any written examination is reported unsatisfactory, the entire advisory committee must agree (1) to proceed with the oral portion of the preliminary examination, or (2) to adopt another course of action regarding the unsatisfactory written examination.

Prior to scheduling the preliminary examination with the other committee members, the committee chair will review the eligibility criteria with the student, using the Preliminary Examination Checklist to ensure the student is ready for the examination. The following list of eligibility requirements applies.

- Student is registered at Texas A&M University for the semester or summer term during which any portion of the preliminary examination may fall. If the entire examination falls between semesters, then the student must be registered for the term immediately preceding the examination.
- An approved degree plan was on file with the GPS at least 90 days prior to the first written examination.
- Student's cumulative GPR is at least 3.000.
- Student's degree plan GPR is at least 3.000.
- All English language proficiency requirements have been satisfied.
- All committee members have scheduled or waived the written portion and agreed to attend the oral portion of the examination or have designated a substitute. Only one substitution is allowed and it cannot be for the committee chair.
- At the end of the semester in which the exam is given, there are no more than 6 hours of coursework remaining on the degree plan (except 681 and 692). The head of the department has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.
- The time span from the first written examination to the oral is **no more than three weeks**. (In cases of department-wide written examinations, this criterion is not applicable.) The head of the department has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.

Once all requirements are met, departments may announce the schedule of the written and oral parts of the examination.

Credit for the preliminary examination is not transferable. If a departmental examination is used as part of the written portion of the preliminary examination, it must be the **last** examination offered prior to the date scheduled for the preliminary examination. In the schedule of **the written portion, all members of the student's advisory committee are to be included**.

Through the preliminary examination, the student's advisory committee should satisfy itself that the student has demonstrated the following qualifications:

1. a mastery of the subject matter of all fields in the program;
2. an adequate knowledge of the literature in these fields and an ability to carry out bibliographical research.

In case a student is required to take, as a part of the written portion of a preliminary examination, an examination administered by the department, the department must:

1. offer the examination at least once every six months. The departmental examination should be announced at least 30 days prior to the scheduled examination date.

2. assume the responsibility for marking the examination satisfactory or unsatisfactory, or otherwise graded, and in the case of unsatisfactory, stating specifically the reasons for such a mark.
3. forward the marked examination to the chair of the student's advisory committee within one week after the examination.

The chair of the student's advisory committee is responsible for making all written examinations available to the members of the advisory committee at or before the oral portion of the preliminary examination. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissention is required to pass a student on his or her preliminary exam.

The chair of the advisory committee will promptly report the results of the Preliminary Examination to the GPS, using the Report of Doctoral Preliminary Examination form and the Preliminary Examination checklist. Both forms must have the appropriate signatures. These forms should be submitted to the GPS within 10 working days of the scheduled preliminary examination.

The Report of the Preliminary Examination form must be submitted with original signatures of the approved committee members. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must also be included on the form submitted to the GPS. The original signature of the department head is also required on the form.

After passing the required oral and written preliminary examinations for the doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination. Upon approval of the student's advisory committee, with no more than one member dissenting, and approval of the GPS, a student who has failed the preliminary examination may be given one re-examination. Adequate time must be given to permit the student to address the inadequacies emerging from the first examination (normally six months). The student and the advisory committee should jointly negotiate a mutually acceptable date for this purpose.

A student must be registered at Texas A&M University for a minimum of one semester credit hour in the semester or summer term in which they will take any portion of the Preliminary Examination.

Steps for Completing the Preliminary Examination

Step	Instruction	Details
1	Establish advisory committee. Submit a degree plan.	When: Prior to the end of the third semester. Approved by: Advisory committee, head of department, and Office of

Step	Instruction	Details
		GPS
2	Complete English language proficiency requirements (if applicable), and coursework detailed on degree plan. Proposal must be submitted.	When: Before preliminary examination.
3	Student and chair review eligibility requirements for the preliminary exam using the "Preliminary Examination Checklist".	When: Several weeks before the proposed date of the preliminary examination. Checklist must be signed by chair and department head.
4	Student checks the availability of committee members.	When: Several weeks before the proposed date of the preliminary examination.
5	Students prepares and submits any petitions necessary by the review of the eligibility requirements, and initiates the necessary approvals within DocuSign system.	When: At least three weeks before the proposed date of the preliminary examinations. Approved by: Advisory committee, department head, and GPS.
6	When exam date is determined, the department may announce the schedule.	Approved by: Committee chair, department head.
7	Upon completion of Preliminary Exam, student initiates report on DocuSign and the report is approved by the advisory committee..	When: Within 10 working days of the date of the scheduled oral examination and no later than 14 weeks prior to the final defense date. Approved by: Advisory committee.
8	GPS notifies the student and chair of any actions necessary to rectify any deficiencies.	When: Upon receipt of the report of the doctoral Preliminary Examination.
Preliminary Examination		

Final Examination/Dissertation Defense

The candidate for the doctoral degree must pass a final examination by the deadline announced in the “Graduate and Professional School Calendar” each semester or summer term. The doctoral student is allowed only one opportunity to take the final examination. No student may be given a final examination unless his or her current official cumulative and degree plan GPAs **are 3.000 or better and he or she has been admitted to candidacy. No unabsolved grades of D, F, or U for any course can be listed on the degree plan.** To absolve a deficient grade, a student must repeat the course and achieve a grade of B or better. A student must have completed all coursework on his or her degree plan with the exception of 691 (research) hours. The student must be registered for all remaining hours; no hours remain to be taken on the degree plan. The preliminary examination results must have been submitted to the Graduate and Professional School 14 weeks prior to the date of the defense. The research proposal must have been submitted to the Graduate and Professional School 25 working days prior to the date of the final examination/defense. Any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the Graduate and Professional School prior to the approval of the final examination. The request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School **a minimum of 10 working days in advance** of the scheduled date. Examination/Defense results must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School within 10 working days of the scheduled examination/defense date. **The Graduate and Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellations.**

The student’s advisory committee will conduct this examination. **The final examination is not to be administered until the dissertation is available in substantially final form to the student’s advisory committee, and all committee members have had adequate time to review the document; generally, the PhD student must present to the committee one month prior to the Final Exam.** Additionally, all English Language Proficiency requirements must be satisfied prior to scheduling the examination. Whereas the final examination may cover the broad field of the candidate’s training, it is presumed that the major portion of the time will be devoted to the dissertation and closely allied topics. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the chair of the advisory committee, be invited to attend the final examination. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings.

The advisory committee will submit its recommendations on the appropriate Report of the Final Examination for Doctoral Candidates form to the Graduate and Professional School regarding acceptability of the candidate for the doctoral degree. A student must be registered in the University in the semester or summer term in which the final examination is taken.

The Report of the Final Examination Form must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the Graduate and Professional School. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must be included on the form submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

Dissertation

The ability to perform independent research must be demonstrated by the dissertation, **which must be the original work of the candidate**. Whereas acceptance of the dissertation is based primarily on its scholarly merit, it must also exhibit creditable literary workmanship. The format of the dissertation must be acceptable to the Graduate and Professional School. Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation are available in the *Thesis Manual*, which is available online at <https://grad.tamu.edu/#>.

After successful defense and approval by the student's advisory committee and the head of the department, a student must submit his/her dissertation in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file must be uploaded to Vireo at etd.tamu.edu. Additionally, a signed Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form and the Copyright and Availability Form with original signatures must be received by the Graduate and Professional School. Both the PDF file and the signed approval form are required by the deadline.

Deadline dates for submitting are announced each semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar (see Time Limit statement). These dates also can be accessed via the website <https://grad.tamu.edu/#>.

Each student who submits a document for review is assessed a one-time thesis/dissertation processing fee through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After commencement, dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

A dissertation that is deemed unacceptable by the Graduate and Professional School because of excessive corrections will be returned to the department head. The manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire review process must begin anew. All original submittal deadlines must be met during the re-submittal process in order to graduate.

Additional Requirements

Residence

A student who enters the doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree must spend one academic year plus one semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. A student who holds a master's degree when he/she enters the doctoral degree program must spend one academic year in resident study. One academic year may include two adjacent regular semesters or one regular semester and one adjacent 10-week summer semester. The third semester is not required to be adjacent to the one year. Enrollment for each semester must be a minimum of 9 credit hours each to satisfy the residence requirement.

A student who enters a doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree may fulfill residence requirements in excess of one academic year (18 credit hours) by registration during summer sessions or by completion of a less-than-full course load (in this context a full course load is considered 9 credit hours per semester).

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, the student is required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of his/her employment to the Graduate and Professional School. An employee should submit verification of his/her employment at the time he/she submits the degree plan. See [Residence Requirements](#).

Time Limit

All requirements for doctoral degrees must be completed within a period of ten consecutive calendar years for the degree to be granted. A course will be considered valid until 10 years after the end of the semester in which it is taken. Graduate credit for coursework more than ten calendar years old at the time of the final oral examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

After passing the required preliminary oral and written examinations for a doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination.

A final corrected version of the dissertation or record of study in electronic format as a single PDF file must be cleared by the Graduate and Professional School no later than one year after the final examination or within the 10-year time limit, whichever occurs first. Failure to do so will result in the degree not being awarded.

Continuous Registration

A student in a program leading to a Doctor of Philosophy who has completed all coursework on his/her degree plan other than 691 (research) are required to be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed. See [Continuous Registration Requirements](#).

Admission to Candidacy

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have:

1. completed all formal coursework on the degree plan with the exception of any remaining 681 and 691 hours
2. a 3.0 Graduate GPA and a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0 with no grade lower than B in any course on the degree plan
3. submitted an approved dissertation proposal
4. passed the preliminary examination (written and oral portions)
5. met the residence requirements. The final examination will not be authorized for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy

Languages

A student is required to possess a competent command of English. For English language proficiency requirements, see the Admissions section of the university graduate catalog.

99-Hour Cap on Doctoral Degrees

In Texas, public colleges and universities are funded by the state according to the number of students enrolled. In accordance with legislation passed by the Texas Legislature, the number of hours for which state universities may receive subvention funding at the doctoral rate for any individual is limited to 99 hours. Texas A&M University and other universities will not receive subvention for hours in excess of the limit.

Institutions of higher education are allowed to charge the equivalent of nonresident tuition to a resident doctoral student who has enrolled in 100 or more semester credit hours of doctoral coursework.

A doctoral student at Texas A&M has seven years to complete his/her degree before being charged out-of-state tuition. A doctoral student who, after seven years of study, has accumulated 100 or more doctoral hours will be charged tuition at a rate equivalent to out-of-state tuition. Please note that the tuition increases will apply to Texas residents as well as students from other states and countries who currently are charged tuition at the resident rate. This includes those doctoral students who hold GAT, GANT, and GAR appointments of 20 or more hours and

recipients of competitive fellowships which would ordinarily qualify them for in-state tuition. Doctoral students who, after seven years of study, have not accumulated 100 hours are eligible to pay in-state tuition if otherwise eligible.

For count purposes, a year is counted as three semesters, normally fall, spring and summer. Using this system, a student is allowed 21 semesters as a G8 student to complete the doctoral degree before being penalized with the higher tuition rate. Any semester in which a G8 student is enrolled for a doctoral level course is counted.

Application for Degree

For information on applying for your degree, please visit the [Graduation](#) section.

Registration

Full-Time Students

Nine hours in the fall/spring terms and six hours in the summer is required to be considered full-time for assistantship, scholarship, and fellowship purposes (see registrar.tamu.edu).

International students holding F-1 or J-1 visas are required by federal regulations to register for and complete a “full course of study” in order to maintain legal immigration status.

Half-Time Students

In order for domestic graduate students to be eligible for financial aid, they must be registered at least half-time. Half-time registration means:

Fall/Spring – 5 hours

10 Week Summer – 3 hours

5 Week Summer – 2 hours

Continuous Registration

Students in graduate degree programs requiring a thesis or dissertation, who have completed all graded course work on the degree plan, are required to be in continuous registration for Fall and Spring semesters until all requirements for the degree have been completed. The minimal requirement to maintain continuous enrollment can be satisfied by registering for 1 credit hour. The continuous registration requirement may be satisfied by registering In Absentia or In Residence. International students should check with ISS for the minimum hours they must be enrolled in for visa purposes. Students on assistantships and many fellowships must maintain full-time enrollment.

Student-Athletes (including practice players, managers, and trainers) **MUST** receive approval from Athletic Compliance before dropping below 12 hours in a fall or spring semester.

Penalties and Blocks

Students should be aware that penalty fees will be assessed for registering after the first day of class. Additional penalties will be assessed for registering or adding courses after the official census date for the term (12th class day of a fall or spring semester, 4th class day of a summer term).

For additional information about a change in schedule, see Section 1.16 of the Texas A&M University Student Rules at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu>.

A student who does not comply with the continuous registration requirement will be blocked from registration. He/she will be allowed to register only after receiving a favorable recommendation from a departmental review committee (not the student's advisory committee), the endorsement of the department head, and the approval of the GPS.

Registering In Absentia

To qualify for In Absentia registration, a student must not have access to or use facilities or properties belonging to or under the jurisdiction of The Texas A&M University System at any time during the semester or summer term for which he or she is enrolled. A student who qualifies for In Absentia registration is required to register each subsequent fall and spring semester for a minimum of one and maximum of four credit hours of 691 or 685.

An international student may have additional registration requirements depending on his/her visa status. He/she should consult with the International Student Services Web site or an International Student Services advisor to obtain current information on these requirements.

Reduced Course Load (International Students Only)

F-1 Reduced Course Load (Full Course Waiver)

Any F-1 student who wishes to drop below full-time enrollment should complete the required form. The authorized exceptions to the full course of study requirement and the rules for reduced course load are included on the ISS website: <http://iss.tamu.edu>

J-1 Reduced Course Load (Full Course Waiver)

Any J-1 student who wishes to drop below full-time enrollment should complete the required form. The authorized exceptions to the full course of study requirement and the rules for reduced course load are included in the ISS website: <http://iss.tamu.edu>

Visiting Classes (Auditing)

Please refer to Texas A&M University Student Rule 2.1 for information regarding visiting (auditing) classes. <http://student-rules.tamu.edu>

Leave of Absence

Under unusual circumstances, a student may petition for a leave of absence. The entire advisory committee, if formed, and head of the department must approve the petition (Petition for Waivers and Exceptions) and submit it to the GPS. If the Associate Provost approves the petition, the registration requirement will be set aside during the period of leave. Leaves will be granted only under conditions that require the suspension of all activities associated with pursuing the degree. For certain types of approved leave, such as medical, the time period for the completion of the degree will stop with the leave and begin when the student returns to the program. Other types of leave may not stop the time limit for the degree. A student should refer to the rules on Time Limits for Master's and doctoral programs. A leave of absence is granted for one year. In case of extenuating circumstances, the leave of absence can be extended by the student's committee and the Associate Provost. A student who returns to the University after an approved leave of absence will not be required to submit an application for re-admission to OGAPS if they return within one academic year. An international student should visit with an International Student Services advisor to determine how a Leave of Absence may impact his/her stay in or his/her re-entry into the U.S.

Grades

Scholastic Requirements

Unless otherwise stated, students in graduate degree programs and post-baccalaureate non-degree students (G6 classification) must maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPR. Degree-seeking students also must maintain a GPR of at least 3.00 on all courses listed on the degree plan. A graduate student will not receive graduate degree credit for undergraduate courses taken on a satisfactory / unsatisfactory (S/U) basis. A graduate student may not receive grades other than satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) in graduate courses bearing the numbers 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 693, and 695 (except for ALEC 695, BUAD 693, AGECE 695, GEOG 695, and IBUS 692). Any other graduate course taken on an S/U basis may not be used on a graduate degree plan (except CHEM 686 and CHEM 697). Graduate courses not on the degree plan may be taken on an S/U basis.

Repeat Courses and Grade Exclusions

Only grades of A, B, and S are acceptable for graduate credit. Grades of C, D, F or Unsatisfactory (U) for courses on the degree plan must be absolved by repeating the courses at Texas A&M University and achieving grades of B or above or Satisfactory (S). A course in which the final grade is C or lower may be repeated once for a higher grade. If the second grade is higher, the original grade will remain on the student's permanent record, and the most recent grade will be used in computing the cumulative and degree plan GPRs. Grades for repeated courses are not automatically replaced; this must be entered and recomputed manually by

GPS. A student repeating a course in which a grade of B or better was originally earned will not receive grade points for the repeated course, unless the catalog states the course may be repeated for credit. The cumulative GPR for a graduate student is computed by using all graded graduate (600- and 700- level) and advanced undergraduate (300- and 400-level) coursework completed at Texas A&M University and eligible to be applied toward a graduate degree. Those involving grades of W-drop (W), Satisfactory (S), Unsatisfactory (U), and Q-drop (Q) shall be excluded.

Academic Deficiency and Probation

If either of a student's cumulative GPR or the GPR for courses listed on the degree plan falls below the minimum of 3.00, he or she will be considered to be scholastically deficient. If the minimum GPR is not attained in a reasonable length of time, the student may be dropped from graduate studies. The procedures for dismissal are explained in the Texas A&M University Student rule 12.7 (refer to the Website <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule12>).

For a scholastically deficient post-baccalaureate non-degree student (G6 classification), the department head shall determine eligibility, and the department is responsible for notifying the GPS if a registration block is to be placed on the student. Any eligible coursework not applied towards a prior graduate degree, and not exceeding time limits, will be included in the student's GPR for the subsequent degree program.

Dismissal of a Graduate Student

For policies and procedures on dismissal of a graduate student please refer to student rule 12.7.1- 12.7.5 <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule12>

Ombudsperson

Graduate students may serve in many roles during their academic careers such as students, teachers, co-workers, colleagues, employees, or technicians. Varying rules/policies apply for the many roles. As long as the expectations for behavior are understood and accepted by all parties, there is rarely a problem. However, challenges can arise when there are differing expectations or conflicting policies, or when one group is accused of violating the rules. The ombudsperson advocates for the processes of graduate education by being equally open and accessible to all parties: students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Typical Concerns Brought to the Ombudsperson

- Academics (grading disputes, testing procedures, instructor/student misunderstandings)
- Conflicts between graduate advisors and their students
- Fiscal matters

- Disagreements/misunderstandings with university policy
- Human or legal rights violations
- Discrimination
- Housing
- Cultural conflicts
- Reporting unethical behavior
- Student conduct

Ombudsperson Contact Information

Ombudsperson for Graduate Education 001 Commons Building 1113 TAMU College Station,
TX 77843-1113

979-845-3631

ombuds@tamu.edu

Annual Evaluations

All graduate level students in the department of Geology and Geophysics are required and expected to complete and submit a Graduate Student Annual Review Form. The forms are sent to students via email from the graduate advisor in early January. The form must be completed and signed by the student and their faculty advisor stating and documenting the student's goals and progress for the year. The form should be completed and returned to the graduate advisor.

Internships

Students are highly encouraged to complete an internship during their course of study. Internships are normally completed during the summer terms, and increase a student's marketability in the workforce upon completion of their degree. Students interested in completing an internship should speak with their faculty advisors, contact a company of interest directly, or visit the Texas A&M Career Center.

Link to Career Center Website: <http://careercenter.tamu.edu/>

International Students and Internships

International students carrying F-1 or J-1 visas may complete an internship on or off- campus, contingent upon authorization from the department and ISS. Internships for F-1 students are commonly referred to as CPT (Curricular Practical Training), and internships for J-1 students are

commonly referred to as Academic Training. Authorization for international students to complete internships is handled on a case-by-case basis, and students are encouraged to set up an appointment to speak with an ISS advisor prior to beginning the paperwork process. Links to F-1 and J-1 forms and guidelines for CPT and Academic training can be found below: F-1 Students <https://iss.tamu.edu/employment/cptinfo.asp>

J-1 Students https://iss.tamu.edu/employment/j1_students.asp-training

Field Trips

Certain courses taken by graduate students in Geology and Geophysics may require field trips that can take place both inside and outside of the United States. Students must sign a consent form, pay any required field trip fees, have a valid passport and/or visa, and have required health insurance. Payment of field trip fees is the responsibility of the student, and is billed directly to the students' account. For information on how to pay for field trips, please contact Student Business Services at 979-847-7337 or visit their website. Students needing assistance in obtaining visas and passports for international travel should contact the Study Abroad Programs Office at 979-845-0544 or visit their website.

Link to Student Business Services: <http://sbs.tamu.edu/>

Link to Study Abroad Programs: <https://studyabroad.tamu.edu/>

International Students and Field Trips

International students enrolled in classes that require field trips are strongly encouraged to speak with an ISS advisor in advance to insure that they are in compliance with ISS rules and DHS (Department of Homeland Security), especially when traveling abroad. When traveling abroad, it is the responsibility of the student to insure that they have a valid tourist visa for the country that they are visiting (if applicable), have a valid travel signature on their Form I-20 or DS 2019, have any required health insurance, and that they have paid any required field trip fees. For more information about traveling internationally/domestically, students should contact the ISS office at 979-845-1824, or visit the ISS website.

Link to ISS Website: <http://iss.tamu.edu>

Official University Travel

Official University Travel

Certain trips such as conferences, research symposium, and fieldwork may qualify as official university travel, and may qualify to be covered at the expense of the department and/or university. Claiming of such travel is done electronically through CONCUR through the <http://sso.tamus.edu> website. Students must receive proper training and authorization before using this website to claim travel as official university travel. Students may not claim personal travel as official university travel. For domestic students, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain passports, health insurance and /or visas for the respective country they plan to visit when traveling abroad. For more information on obtaining passports and visas, please contact the Study Abroad Programs Office at 979-845-0544 or by email at studyabroad@tamu.edu.

International Students and Official University Travel

International students holding F-1 and J-1 visas are encouraged to attend conferences, research symposium, and conduct fieldwork during their studies at Texas A&M University. Travel for these purposes may qualify as official university travel and may be eligible to be covered at the expense of the department and/or university. It is up to the student to ensure that they have a valid passport, visa, health insurance and travel signature on their form I-20 or DS-2019 prior to traveling, especially when traveling abroad. Failure to remain in compliance with ISS and DHS policies may result in the loss of an international student visa, and/or the privilege to study at Texas A& M University. Students may not claim personal travel as official university travel. For more information on international student travel both domestically and internationally, please contact International Student Services office at 979-845-1824 or by email at <http://iss.tamu.edu>.

Mentoring and Student Organizations

Mentoring

The student's faculty advisor who is also their committee chair serves as their primary academic advisor, principal thesis/dissertation advisor, and the general mentor for their academic program and research. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor frequently to ensure successful progression and completion of their graduate program.

Geology & Geophysics Graduate Student Council (GGGSC)

The Geology & Geophysics Graduate Student Council is the governing body for the graduate students in the department of Geology & Geophysics. The council meets monthly to discuss issues pertinent to graduate students within the department. The council provides information regarding graduation, courses, symposium, speakers and other events. Each year, the council

puts on the Student Research Symposium for Doctoral, Masters and Undergraduate candidates. The council also coordinates social events throughout the year for students and faculty. For more information on joining the GGSC, please visit gggsc.tamu.edu or email tamu.gggsc@gmail.com.

American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG)

The purpose of the AAPG student chapter is to provide information and opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students studying petroleum geology or related studies. The organization is a forum for notifying students about career opportunities, academic opportunities, and occurrences/events within the national and international geoscience community. The national AAPG organization utilizes the student chapter to make students aware of AAPG meetings, publications, and additional information. The organization also provides information on scholarship opportunities open to students within the petroleum geology field. For more information, please visit <http://www.tamuaapg.com/> or email tamu.aapg@gmail.com

Petroleum Certificate/Berg-Hughes Center

If you are interested in the Berg-Hughes Center, Please contact Mukul Bhatia at mbhatia@tamu.edu or Dawn Spencer at dspencer@geos.tamu.edu. Inquiries about the petroleum certificate may also be made to Ms. Trisha Fike at trishafike@tamu.edu.

Departmental Equipment, Office Space, and Xeroxing

Departmental Equipment

Departmental equipment is any equipment that is owned by either the department or the university. All students are entitled to usage of departmental equipment as long as prior authorization is obtained beforehand. The department implies a strict rule that all departmental equipment must be returned in good condition. Any damages to departmental equipment must be reported immediately to the proper individual. Failure to use or return equipment properly may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of equipment use privileges.

Office Space

Office space is provided for graduate students that hold TA and RA positions and Fellowships. Office space for non-funded students is provided as it becomes available.

Students that are provided office space will be required to fill out a key check out form in order to receive a key for their office space. The form must be signed by the student as well as their faculty advisor prior to receiving a key. Key forms are available in the department's main office. Students are allowed possession of their keys for as long as their office space is occupied. All

keys must be turned into the front office prior to graduation and/or termination/resignation of TA, RA, or Fellowship privileges. A hold will be placed on your account if your key is not returned to the business office.

Students that are granted office space will be provided with a desk and chair by the department. Any other supplies will be provided by the student at their own expense.

Copying

Any student who prints excess items is subject to charges imposed by the department and/or university.

Building Access, Parking, and Computer Usage

Building Access

All graduate students in the department of Geology & Geophysics are entitled to building access during regular hours and after hours. Regular hours are from 7:30 A.M. - 5 P.M. Monday – Friday. During this time, students may enter the building through any door. After hours are 5 P.M. -7:30 A.M. Monday - Friday and Saturday and Sunday. Students needing access to the building after hours must enter through the designated after hours entrances by swiping their university identification card. To obtain after hours building access, please go to the business office room 108 in Old Halbouty. If no one is available, please go to the advising office room 109 in Old Halbouty.

Parking

All students are to park in the designated student parking lots, garages, and/or visitor lots. Parking in an unauthorized area may result in a parking ticket, and/or towing of the students car at their own expense. For information regarding parking, please contact the transportation department at 979-862-7275 or visit their website at <http://transport.tamu.edu>

Computer Usage

All graduate students are granted the privilege to use any of the student computer labs within the building. A username and password will be required to operate departmental computers. For assistance in setting up a username, password, departmental mail, or conditions of use, please contact I.T. at help@geos.tamu.edu

Exit Survey

It is vital to our program that each student complete an exit survey upon completion of their degree. This survey assists with department assessment, provides us student feedback, and helps us provide high quality education for our graduate students.