Frequently Asked Questions

(Last updated: 11/19/2014)

Curriculum

1. **What are the characteristics of MPSGIS curriculum?**
   The MPSGIS curriculum tends to be technically oriented and covers a wide range of topics, such as spatial analysis, spatial statistics, scripting and programming, modeling, remote sensing, digital image processing, spatial databases, Internet GIS, and Mobile GIS. The curriculum is also frequently updated and upgraded to keep up with the fast development of geospatial science and technology and also to match the skills demand from the job market.

2. **Do I need to buy software for the courses in this program?**
   No, we provide a free copy of ARCGIS software.

3. **Is the MPSGIS program online?**
   Yes, all the classes are offered in real classrooms or GIS labs and at the same time broadcast online. For the online teaching, it is interactive and dynamic through webcam and headset very much like sitting in a real classroom. In addition, entire lectures (lecture slides, presentation, and Q&A interactions) are video-archived for reviewing.

4. **Why is the MPSGIS program on quarter system while the rest of the university on semester system?**
   Because most students in the program work part-time or full-time, they usually learn better if they only take one or, at most, two classes at one time so that they can concentrate on it. Under the semester system, in order to complete the program in a timely fashion, students would have to take multiple courses during the semester. This is too stressful for most students. Instead, the 10-week quarter-based courses are shorter but more intensive, which allows the students to concentrate and do better in terms of learning outcome.

Admission

1. **What are the admission criteria?**
   To be admitted into the MPSGIS program, a candidate usually has to meet the following criteria:
   - A bachelor degree from an accredited institution
   - A GPA of 3.0 or above (rare exceptions can be made for applicants)
   - Strong motivation and interest of studying geospatial information sciences

   Applicants are not required to have any GIS or remote sensing background to apply and get admitted into the program. However, before they can start the program, they must make sure to meet the prerequisite requirements. Preference is given to applicants who have worked or will work in GIS-related fields.

2. **Do you offer spring enrollment?**
   Yes.
3. **What are prerequisite requirements?**
   Before they start the program, the students must meet the following prerequisite requirements:
   - Master of Professional Studies degree track (The students must have had course work in GIS, remote sensing, and statistics while getting grades of at least “B”. Students who don’t have course work on these subjects but have actual working knowledge need to submit example work to demonstrate their proficiency.)
   - Graduate Certificate track (The students must have had course work in GIS and statistics while getting grades of at least “B”.)

4. **Can I switch from Graduate Certificate track to Master degree track?**
   Yes, you can switch from Graduate Certificate track to the MPS track after you take some classes. However, you will need to resubmit a new application through the Graduate School even though you can use the same application materials. In fact, most GC students have switched to the MPS track in the program and there are only few GC students.

**Application**

1. **What are the application deadlines?**
   You are encouraged to contact us with any questions on the application deadline. The actual deadlines may vary depending on the applicant's background. U.S. citizens and permanent residents, who have completed the prerequisites, may apply as late as August 1 and will be considered as long as there is room in the program. However, earlier applications are encouraged.
   - Fall Admissions Deadline: August 1st
   - Spring Admissions Deadline: January 31st

2. **What documents are required for the application?**
   Besides the standard Graduate School Application Form, applicants are required to submit the official transcripts from previous colleges or universities. A cover letter or personal statement, Resume, and at least two recommendation letters should be included in the application.

**Graduation**

1. **How long does it take to complete the Graduate Certificate?**
   Students can complete the Graduate Certificate in one year or less, usually taking one course per quarter.

2. **How long does it take to complete the MPS degree?**
   Students who study full-time can finish the program in two years or less, while the part-time students approximately in two and half years.