

# **PhD Student Handbook Academic Year 2025-2026**

(NOTE: If it is found that any of these rules are not in accord with the rules of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, then the Graduate School Rules apply,  
<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/> .)

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# PhD Program Structure

## 1.1 Admission Policy

### 1.1.1 Requirements for Admission

The Department admits students to our doctoral program who have already completed a master's degree and exceptionally well qualified students who have only completed a bachelor's degree. In all cases, admitted students are required to either possess or shall develop a solid foundation in the discipline of Geography. Admission to the doctoral program is also dependent on the support of two faculty.

### 1.1.2 Academic Evaluation

Following formal admission to the Geographical Sciences PhD program, the portfolio advisory committee (PAC) will evaluate doctoral students during orientation week to determine the strength of their Geography graduate-level background. The assessment of the faculty at this review will determine the track that an entering PhD student will pursue before advancing to candidacy. (See Tables 1 and 2 below.) Students can appeal their case to the committee if they do not agree with their review.

## 1.2 Required Coursework

Incoming PhD students are advised on elective classes by their Advisor in summer before arrival. Students in the program should consult with their Advisor and other members of the portfolio advisory committee (PAC) on elective courses. To enroll in courses, students email the Asst. Academic director and CC their advisor, with a course list five working days before the start of the semester.

### 1.2.1 All Students

Before advancing to candidacy, all doctoral students are required to take the following six courses listed below. (14-17 credit hours.)

1. GEOG 601 The Nature and Practice of Science (3 credits, *grade of B or higher required*)
2. GEOG 608 Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment (1-3 credits, *grade of B or higher required*)
  - a. *Note: 608 represents the portfolio and is taken in the semester the portfolio is completed.*
3. GEOG 606 Quantitative Spatial Analysis (3 credits, a minimum grade of B is required).
4. GEOG798: Department Seminar (1 credit/semester, 2 credits during PhD program). *Note: A PhD student may advance to candidacy without completing this requirement, but must complete the requirement before the dissertation defense.*
5. TLTC798: University Teaching and Learning (2 credits, typically offered in the spring semesters)
6. Additional Coursework: In addition to the above requirements, most PhD students will be expected to take additional electives to strengthen their background in subjects related to their dissertation research. These courses may be independently selected by the PhD student or made a requirement for that PhD student as a result of discussions with their Faculty Advisor and/or PAC. We strongly encourage students to take 6/700 level 3 credit courses rather than GEOG898 credits, unless advised to do otherwise. Exceptions may be made upon the agreement of the Faculty Advisor and the Graduate Director based upon previous experience in appropriate graduate-level courses.

### 1.2.2 Doctoral Students with Strong Geography Background

An example of the first two years of doctoral coursework for a student with a strong geography background is provided in Table 1. *Note: All doctoral students with a full (20 hour/week) assistantship of Departmental funding to support their studies are required to take 8-credit hours of coursework during each semester until they have advanced to candidacy. Students who do not receive funding from the Department are required to enroll in at least one credit each semester after coursework is complete and before advancing to candidacy.*

*International students in particular need to be sure they are maintaining full time student status based on the number of units they earn per semester. For more information on earning units via credits, see: <https://registrar.umd.edu/current/registration/registration.html#fistat> .*

**Table 1: Example 1<sup>st</sup> 4 Semesters Course of Studies**

*Doctoral Student with Strong Geography Background Assumes Advance to Candidacy at end of 4<sup>th</sup> Semester*

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
GEOG601 (3) GEOG6/700x (3) GEOG898 (1) GEOG798 (1)	GEOG606 (3) GEOG6/700x (3) GEOG608 (1) TLTC798 (2)	GEOG898 (7) GEOG798 (1)	GEOG898 (8)

**1.2.3 Doctoral Students without Strong Geography Background or Entering with a Bachelors-Only Degree**

In addition to the requirements for all doctoral students, doctoral students without a masters-level background in geography will be required to take:

a. Distribution requirement of three 600-level or 700-level courses: one each from the three departmental Geography themes. Students should confirm with the Graduate Office that a specific class will satisfy this requirement. B minimum. *Note: These 3 courses meet the electives requirement noted above.*

- **Environmental and Biological Aspects of Earth Systems Science (EBA)**: Climatology, geomorphology, biogeography, earth systems science
- **Human Dimensions of Global Change (HD)**: Cultural, population, economic, urban, regional, human dimensions of global change.
- **Geospatial Information Sciences (GIS)**: GIS, remote sensing, spatial analysis, computer cartography, modeling.

*Note: To complete the above may require completion of 400-level prerequisites*

b. A minimum of nine additional credits at the 400-level or above that are related to the student’s area of intended doctoral research. (These may include the 400-level prerequisites for the courses listed above.) Courses may be taken in departments other than Geography with permission of the student's PAC. The student's PAC also advises on electives. We strongly encourage students to take 6/700 level 3 credit courses rather than GEOG898 credits, unless advised to do otherwise.

*Note: This requirement may be modified by a faculty advisor upon initial evaluation of masters students entering the PhD program without strong geography background.*

An example of the first two years of doctoral coursework for a student without strong geography background and all doctoral students entering with a bachelors-only degree is provided in Table 2. *Note: All doctoral students with a full (20 hour/week) assistantship of Departmental funding to support their studies are required to take 8-credit hours of coursework during each semester until they have advanced to candidacy. Students who do not receive funding from the Department are required to enroll in at least one credit each semester after coursework is complete and before advancing to candidacy. International students in particular need to be sure they are maintaining full time student status based on the number of units they earn per semester. For more information on earning units via credits, see:*

*<https://registrar.umd.edu/current/registration/registration.html#fistat>.*

**Table 2: Example 1<sup>st</sup> 4 Semesters Course of Studies**  
*Doctoral Student without Strong Geography Background*  
*And Students Entering with a Bachelors-Only Degree*

Assumes Advance to Candidacy at end of 6<sup>th</sup> Semester

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
GEOG601 (3) GEOG6/700x EBA (3) GEOG898 (1) GEOG798 (1)	GEOG606 (3) GEOG6/700x HD (3) TLTC798 (2)	GEOG6/700X GIS (3) GEOG798 (1) GEOG898 (4)	GEOG898 (7) GEOG608 (1)

#### 1.2.4 Coursework following Advancement to Candidacy

According to Graduate School policy (<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/Catalog/policy.php?doctoral-degrees#credit-requirements>), a minimum of 12 credits of dissertation research (GEOG899) are to be taken after advancement to candidacy. Upon advancing to candidacy, the student will be automatically registered for 6 hours of GEOG899 each fall and spring term, and pay a flat tuition fee (this doctoral candidacy tuition is determined by the Graduate School and is presently the equivalent to the cost of 1.6 graduate credit hours). The candidacy tuition fee must be paid every semester regardless of whether a student is registered for other courses.

*Note: A student cannot register for GEOG899 before advancing to candidacy. For research activities carried out before advancing to candidacy, a student may register for GEOG 898 (Pre-Candidacy Research).*

#### 1.2.5 Doctoral Student Teaching

All graduate students are strongly encouraged to gain teaching experience during doctoral studies. The Department of Geographical Sciences offers a number of options for teaching experience. These opportunities range from leading discussion sections, teaching lab sections for specific courses, presenting guest lectures in courses, and serving as a course instructor. This last option is also available to qualified individuals during the winter and two summer terms. Students wishing to obtain teaching experience should discuss their desires with their advisor, supervisor (if they are Graduate Research Assistants), and the Associate Chair for Academic Affairs. The Associate Chair will review the student's background and qualifications and consult with the student's advisor and supervisor (if appropriate) in order to aid the student in developing a plan for teaching experience. The development of this plan should normally occur during the student's first two years of study. If a student thinks a denial of a request for a teaching assignment is unfair, he/she may have the case reviewed by the Graduate Director. TAs/RAs can apply to be an instructor of record for a course after they have approval from their advisor; and 1) been a TA for at least one course; 2) advanced to candidacy; and 3) received positive teaching reviews from students and evaluations from the main instructor.

Fair selections of RAs to be a TA need to be reviewed by Undergraduate Director and Graduate Director through RAs teaching requirements, e.g. TLTC798 or taking seminars on campus, or from qualifications as UG TA. TAs are limited to teaching the same course for no more than three times in Winter and Summer. At the end of the semester, there will be an evaluation of the TA's performance by the course instructor and by the TA.

### 1.3 Faculty Advisor

#### 1.3.1 General Requirements

All doctoral students are required to have a faculty advisor. The faculty advisor is the student's first point of contact among the faculty. The student's faculty advisor will normally serve as the Chair of the PAC, the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee (DSAC) and the Dissertation Examining Committee (DEC). If the student's advisor is a member of the Research Faculty of the department, the Chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee shall be the tenured/tenure-track co-advisor and the Research Faculty advisor shall serve as the co-chair.

### 1.3.2 *Advisor Assignment*

All students will be assigned an advisor at the beginning of their first semester of enrollment. This assignment will be based on the student's research interests and discussions between the student, candidate advisors, and the Graduate Director, and is normally one of the two faculty members who agreed to be sponsors. It is generally understood that if the student is a GRA, the PI funding the student will be the advisor. The student has the right to select his/her own advisor, and change advisors if necessary. However, if the student is a GRA, selecting a new advisor may result in loss of this GRA support.

### 1.3.3 *Advisor Credentials*

Normally, the selected advisor will be a tenured/tenure-track member of the Geographical Sciences Faculty. Research Faculty may also serve as a faculty advisor with the approval of the Graduate Director or Department Chair. Qualifications for eligible research faculty are as follows: (a) must hold the position of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, or Research Professor; (b) should have prior experience supervising graduate students on their committees; and (c) must be a member of the Graduate Faculty at the University. If a member of the Research Faculty is appointed as advisor, then a member of the tenured/tenure-track faculty must be appointed as co-advisor. The tenured/tenure-track co-advisor must agree to become the advisor in case the Research Faculty cannot continue advising the student.

### 1.3.4 *Changing Advisors*

It may be necessary for a graduate student to change advisors. Under such circumstances, the student should contact the Graduate Director to discuss the need for a change. If the Director of Graduate Studies is the advisor, the graduate student should contact the Department Chair. After discussions between the student and the Director (or Chair), the Director (or Chair) will contact the affected parties and discuss the desired changes. The student and affected parties must then complete the *Request for Change of PhD Department Advisor* form on the Intranet. The student should consider changing advisors carefully, as it is not advisable to do so often.

### 1.3.5 *Special Concern and Grievance Procedures*

Should students have special concerns or grievances, they should consult the Department's Grievance Policy in Appendix E.

## 1.4 **Portfolio Advisory Committee**

Upon admission to the PhD program, the Graduate Director will appoint a Portfolio Advisory Committee (PAC) for the graduate student. The PAC is composed of three tenured or tenure track faculty members chaired by the primary advisor. This PAC will provide guidance to the student on coursework and in the development of their Comprehensive Portfolio, and conduct the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment (CPA), which is required for Advancement to Candidacy. Upon completion of the CPA, the PAC will provide the graduate office with the Portfolio Assessment Summary Form (on the Intranet). The details of the PAC and CPA are provided in Appendix B. The Department does not allow CPA defenses or PAC meetings in the summer term (except for the pre-scheduled PAC meetings the week before the semester begins). For an exception to this policy, students must first confirm that all existing committee members are available and willing to participate in a summer defense or meeting. The advisor must then write to the Department Chair and Graduate Director asking for a summer defense or meeting as an exception to the policy.

## 1.5 **Doctoral Student Advisory Committee (DSAC)**

After advancing to pre-candidacy, each student will select members to serve on a DSAC in consultation with the advisor. The DSAC should include a minimum of four people, all of whom are (or will become) members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maryland.

Dissertation Student Advisory Committee (DSAC) Membership: 4 members

- At least 2 within GEOG
- At least 2 tenured or tenure track
- At least 1 not in GEOG

Although not required at this point, it might be helpful to select your Dean's Representative, who will be a required member of the student's dissertation examining committee (DEC).

The responsibilities of the DSAC include:

- Advising the student during the development of his/her dissertation proposal;
- Suggesting additional coursework and readings to ensure the student develops an adequate base of knowledge and competency in areas related to the student's research;
- Determining that the student has knowledge and competency in the areas related to the proposed dissertation research before advancing to candidacy;
- Reviewing the written dissertation proposal and conducting an oral examination of the proposal and the student's qualifications; and
- Continuing to advise the student during the conduct of his/her research up until the time of the Dissertation Defense.
- In general, members of the DSAC in addition to the Dean's representative will form the DEC.

#### *1.5.1 Nomination of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee.*

Students must nominate their DSAC no later than the end of first semester after CPA has been defended. As soon as a student and her/his advisor have identified the members of the DSAC and these members have agreed to serve on this committee, the student should file the *PhD Doctoral Student Advisory Committee Nomination Form* (found on the Intranet) with the signatures of the student, advisor, and committee members. Students may submit the nomination form to the Assistant Academic Director without having all members officially nominated to the Graduate Faculty (section 1.5.2). However, the Graduate Director will not sign off on the form until the Department TTK faculty have voted outside members onto the Graduate Faculty.

#### *1.5.2 Nomination for Membership on the Graduate Faculty.*

All members of the student's DSAC and DEC must be members of the Graduate Faculty. There are three categories of membership: (a) Full Members: University of Maryland (College Park) tenured / tenure-track faculty; (b) Associate Members: non-tenure-track UMCP faculty who hold research, adjunct, or affiliated appointments; and (c) Special Members: individuals recognized as outstanding scholars who do not have any official affiliation at UMCP. If a person is not a Member of the Graduate Faculty, the student's advisor needs to nominate this person to the Graduate Faculty. The chair of the DSAC provides the Graduate Director with the nominee's C.V. and a brief explanation as to why the nominee is suited to join the graduate faculty and serve on the DSAC. The Graduate Director makes nominations for appointment to Associate or Special Member of the Graduate Faculty, on the recommendation of the Full Members of the Graduate Faculty in the unit. Each nomination shall include a letter of support from the Head of the home unit, confirmation of approval of the Full Members of the Graduate Faculty in the unit, and current curriculum vitae. Appointment is by approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. The term of appointment is five years and is renewable upon re-nomination by the Head of the home unit after appropriate review within the unit. The appointment is terminated upon resignation or retirement after one year. Graduate faculty nominees must be approved at the departmental level (although not the Graduate School level) before students defend their dissertation proposals. Graduate faculty nominees must be approved at the Graduate School level before students defend their dissertations.

#### *1.5.3 Changes to the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee.*

Should a student desire to change the membership of the DSAC, she/he should first talk with his/her advisor and then notify the Director of Graduate Studies of the proposed change. The student will then circulate the *Request for Changes to the PhD Doctoral Student Advisory Committee Form* (found on the Intranet) to the affected committee members for the required signatures and return to the graduate programs office.

### 1.5.4 Meetings with the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee

The student should organize a meeting with the Members of the DSAC as often as is necessary to make satisfactory progress in the development of her/his dissertation proposal and dissertation research, and at least once a year following the CPA defense. DSAC meetings must be held once the Advisor, in association with the PAC, certifies that significant progress has been made with the preparation of the proposal. The student and the DSAC are required to meet at least one time as a group at least one month (within the 9 month academic calendar) before the Dissertation Proposal Defense. A *Doctoral Student Advisory Committee Report* (found on the Intranet) form must be submitted to the graduate programs office for each meeting. The Department does not allow DSAC meetings in the summer term. For an exception to this policy, students must first confirm that all existing committee members are available and willing to participate in a summer meeting. The advisor must then write to the Department Chair and Graduate Director asking for a summer meeting as an exception to the policy.

## 1.6 Annual Doctoral Student Progress Certification

### 1.6.1 Annual Review of Doctoral Student Progress

GEOG PhD students must meet the benchmarks in the table below and follow the Graduate School benchmarks. Students may appeal the Departmental and Graduate School dismissals. Students should consult Graduate School's policies on parental leave, and ensure they meet the timelines for submitting leave requests to stop their benchmark clock: <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/> .

#### GEOG Ph.D. Student Benchmarks

Benchmark	Time	Action if missed
1: Completion of coursework	ASAP and no later than the end of the 2nd year for MS-GEOG students, 3rd year for non MS-GEOG students	S*
2: Successful completion of the CPA	ASAP and no later than end of 1st year for MS-GEOG students, 2nd year for non MS-GEOG students	S*
3: Form a DSAC	No later than end of first semester after CPA defended. Ex: defend CPA in January 2024 form DSAC by end of Spring 2024 semester. Defend CPA in August 2024, form DSAC no later than end of Fall 2024 semester.	U
4: Meet with DSAC	At least once each year following CPA defense (the dissertation proposal defense is considered a DSAC meeting). DSAC sends student feedback with specific goals for the next months on traceable form.	U
5: Advancement to Candidacy	Preferably within 2 years after the CPA defense, no later than 5 years after entry into the program.	U GS: automatic dismissal from the program if more than 5 years from entry.

6: Positive annual review	Each year, starting the second year of the PhD program	First U: possibility of losing funding and must meet with the Chair/Grad Director. Second U (not consecutive): dismissal from program.
7: Dissertation defense	Preferably within 2 years after advancement to candidacy, no later than 4 years from advancing to candidacy, and no later than 9 years after entry into the program.	U GS: automatic dismissal from the program if not within 4 years of advancing to candidacy or 9 years of entry.

Each January the faculty convene to review each Ph.D. students' progress through the benchmarks, and give students a mark of S (satisfactory), U (unsatisfactory), S\* (A temporary mark that will change to a permanent S or U pending a student's progression through certain criteria within a given time frame. Faculty advisor outlines the criteria and timeline in which the student needs to pass in the annual review letter. Upon successful and timely completion of the criteria, the S\* becomes an S review. Upon unsuccessful completion, the S\* becomes a U review.), or N/A. The N/A mark is given to students who have submitted for or been granted a Graduate School leave of absence for childbearing, adoption, serious health conditions, dependent care, or financial hardship (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/registration-policies/#leave-of-absence-for-childbearing-adoption-serious-health-condition-dependent-care-or-financial-hardship>) as well as for military service (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/registration-policies/#leave-of-absence-for-military-service>).

Before the meeting, the Asst Academic director enters review marks based on meeting or missing benchmarks 1-5, 7 in the table above. Faculty add to reviews with notes on:

- Progress towards the dissertation based on (Date of last DSAC meeting, Status of each of the dissertation chapters, DSAC feedback).
- Biggest accomplishments this year.
- Any other extenuating circumstances.

The review mark is finalized at the all-faculty student review meeting in January, and the Asst Academic director enters review marks into Canvas for students soon after the January meeting.

### *1.6.2 Negative Annual Review Procedures and Appeals*

#### One Negative Annual Review

- Review rating is only valid if given in writing to student before start of next academic year
- Students may petition the Graduate Director to reverse rating: Graduate Director will discuss the rating with the advisor and will weigh faculty comments during the review. A decision on the petition must be given within two weeks. If denied, the student may appeal to the Associate Chair. The Graduate Director has discretion with respect to continued TA and state fellowship funding. RA supervisor has equal discretion for termination of funding.

#### Two Negative Annual Reviews

- Student will automatically be terminated
- Students may appeal to the Graduate Director to reverse the decision; Graduate Director will meet with advisor, student, and will weigh faculty review comments. Student must initiate appeal within one month of notification
- If the decision is reversed, the student will remain in the program. This will require the consent of the current advisor or the securing of a new advisor. Funding may be terminated regardless of decision reversal
- If the decision is upheld, the student may appeal to the Chair. The Chair is free to use any information available in reaching the decision. The Chair holds a meeting with the Associate Chair and the Graduate Director who will then decide as a group (majority opinion). The decision should be made as soon as possible, but no later than the start of the next academic year

In addition to causes for termination by the department, discussed above, a doctoral student may be terminated from the program by the University or the Graduate School for the following reasons:

- **University:** A Teaching or Graduate Research Assistantship can be terminated for the following causes: incompetence, inefficiency, or neglect of duty; misconduct that is job-related; and delinquency in academic work; sexual harassment or other unethical or illegal behavior, loss or cancellation of funding source, or voluntary mutual agreement. If the Teaching or Graduate Research Assistantship of a student is terminated by the University, they will also be terminated from the program.
- a. **Graduate School:** Failure of the student to Advance to Candidacy within five years and complete all requirements for the Doctoral Degree within nine years are causes for termination from the program. Failure to register for courses for two consecutive Fall and Spring semesters are causes for termination from the program.

## 1.7 Advancement to Candidacy

### 1.7.1 General Requirements

All guidelines and policies that are used by the University for Dissertation Defenses with respect to Location, Open Dissertation Examination, and Public Notices are to be followed during the Dissertation Proposal Defense (<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/Catalog/policy.php?doctoral-degrees#the-doctoral-dissertation-and-examination> ). The student must be advanced to candidacy five years from admission to the doctoral program and at least six months before the date on which the degree will be conferred. Under certain circumstances, a one-year extension may be granted by the University.

### 1.7.2 Specific Department Requirements

Advancement to candidacy in the Department of Geographical Sciences requires the following:

- a. Completion of the required, elective and PAC and DSAC-defined additional coursework.
- b. Passing the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment (CPA).
- c. Successful defense of the student's dissertation written proposal.
  - i. Dissertation proposal must be no longer than the equivalent of 30 double-spaced pages (12 point font), with appropriate figures and tables, not including the reference list. Style and format of Proposals must follow the Campus Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide. (see [https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/Forms/etd\\_style\\_guide\\_2021\\_v2.pdf](https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/Forms/etd_style_guide_2021_v2.pdf) )
  - ii. Copies of the written proposal shall be provided to each member of the DSAC not less than 10 working days before the announced date for the Dissertation Proposal Defense. A copy of the dissertation Proposal should also be uploaded to the Department's Google Docs share drive where it will be available for review to any interested party.

### 1.7.3 Dissertation Proposal Defense.

The proposal defense is to show research can be accomplished and successful completion is appropriate for the PhD degree. The defense normally should be completed within 2 years after the CPA defense, no later than 5 years after entry into the program. Timelines will vary, of course, based on an individual student's circumstances, such as external employment and part-time status. A proposal defense typically lasts no more than two hours. During the defense, the DSAC shall also determine that the candidate has the overall knowledge and qualifications required to carry out the research outlined in the proposal. The Defense is open to the public, attended by all members of the DSAC. Additional Procedures outlined in Appendix C. The Department does not allow dissertation proposal defenses in the summer term. For an exception to this policy, students must first confirm that all existing committee members are available and willing to participate in a summer defense. The advisor must then write to the Department Chair and Graduate Director asking for a summer defense as an exception to the policy.

## 1.8 Dissertation Defense

### 1.8.1 General Requirements

The defense of the dissertation follows the rules and procedures set out in the Graduate School Catalog (<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/Catalog/policy.php?doctoral-degrees#the-doctoral-dissertation-and-examination> ). The dissertation defense is public. The student has 2 years after advancement to candidacy, and no later than 9 years after entry into the program to complete their Dissertation Defense, including submission of a completed, written copy of her/his dissertation to the University. Under certain circumstances, a one-year extension may be granted by the University. Departmental policy and significant highlights from Graduate School policy follow. Additional procedures outlined in Appendix D. The Department does not allow dissertation defenses in the summer term. For an exception to this policy, students must first confirm that all existing committee members are available and willing to participate in a summer defense. The advisor must then write to the Department Chair and Graduate Director asking for a summer defense as an exception to the policy.

Dissertation Examining Committee (DEC) membership: 5 voting members.

- 1 Chair, who is tenured or tenure track. If not T/TT, the advisor and student fill out the Grad School form requesting a co-chair with a T/TT.
- 1 Dean's Rep who is a tenured faculty member of another UMD department.
- At least 3 of the 5 are T/TT faculty.
- At least 2 of the 5 from GEOG.
- At least 1 outside GEOG. Dean's Rep counts if voting member. If Dean's Rep is not a voting member, you will have a committee of 6 instead of 5.
- ALL on "Graduate Faculty" and only T/TT automatically are. If not on the Graduate faculty, you must vote them on. See Intranet for procedures.

### 1.8.2 Dissertation Credits

A minimum of 12 credits of GEOG899 are needed. However, if the Chair and the Graduate Director grant an exception to graduate in the Summer Term, then he/she must register for at least one credit for that term, which can be GEOG899 if the student has not accumulated the 12 credits necessary for graduation or another course if they have.

### 1.8.3 Readiness for defense

Students should meet with their DSAC at least one and no more than three months (of the 9 month academic calendar) before the dissertation defense. The purpose of the meeting is to establish whether the research has reached a stage at which it is ready for a defense. All Committee members should attend except the Dean's representative, whose presence is optional.

## Appendix A—Terminal Masters

1. Eligibility: Students who are terminated from the program or decide voluntarily that they do not want to continue with the PhD program may petition for a terminal Master's degree. Ideally students seeking terminal MS degrees initiate this process at least one semester before they intend to graduate with the terminal MS to account for degree objective change processing, graduation timelines and additional required coursework. Once deciding to leave the PhD program with a terminal master, students must petition the graduate director to do a terminal MS as soon as possible, within one month.
  - a. The acceptance of the petition for a terminal masters is at the sole discretion of the Department and will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. The Graduate School's requirements are posted here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PLQuzjdUd6GPLiJV8e8UWQHuzTRYcMFFPfwLd59Njig/edit>
  - b. The graduate director consults the advisor and makes the decision.
  - c. Decision based on criteria used for annual review, advisor and committee advice, reasons for termination, etc.
  - d. The former phd advisor will have the right of refusal to supervise the MS product. If the advisor refuses, the student must include in their petition a change of advisor form, signed by the former and replacement advisors.
  - e. Normally not available to students with an MS in Geography and related areas.
2. The product has to qualify as a scholarly product (a research proposal is not necessarily sufficient).
3. Once there is a petition to leave the program, funding is subject to cancellation.
4. If the student's petition is approved, they have one semester to complete the scholarly product.
5. A submitted and/or published paper with a significant contribution by the student may be used to satisfy the requirement if conducted as part of the student's research at UMD.
6. Coursework requirements: students may apply credits earned as part of the PhD program to the MS degree. The Graduate School will not apply GEOG898 or GEOG899 credits to an MS degree. Students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit in the semester in which they graduate, even if they have already completed all the required coursework below.

<b>MS Degree Coursework</b>
GEOG601 (3)
GEOG798 (1)
GEOG606 (3)
GEOG798 (1)
600Elective (3)
600Technical (3)
600Physical (3)
GEOG789 (3)
GEOG789 (3)
600Human (3)
600Elective (3)
GEOG 798 (1)
Total credits (30)

## Appendix B – Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment

In the **Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment** meeting, the focus shifts from academic and professional development to formal evaluation. The purpose of this meeting is to assess the student's readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of the doctoral program (analogous to the traditional doctoral comprehensive exam). Discussion will normally center on the following components of the portfolio:

- Current Goal Statements
- Research and Professional Competencies for which additional preparation is needed
- Evidence of Analytical and Integrative Thinking
- Initial Dissertation Planning

At the end of the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment meeting, the student is asked to leave the room, and the Portfolio Advising Committee discusses the student's progress and performance, and agrees upon one of three possible **Outcomes** that are based upon the evaluation criteria and scoring guidelines (see below):

- **Outcome 1: Pass.** The student has demonstrated readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of the program and may do so immediately (although non-binding recommendations for modifications or additional work may be specified by the doctoral advising committee); The PAC is disbanded.
- **Outcome 2: Conditional Pass.** The student may proceed to the dissertation phase of the program when required actions are completed -- a second meeting is not required, although a deadline for completing the required actions (between 1 month and 12 months from the date of the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment meeting) must be specified along with precise procedures for verifying that these actions have been completed (non-binding recommendations for modifications or additional work may also be specified by the doctoral advising committee). If the student does not meet the timeline or the actions taken are insufficient, the result of the assessment is changed from Conditional Pass to Fail.
- **Outcome 3: Fail.** A second Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment meeting will be scheduled when required actions are completed, with the second meeting scheduled no earlier than one month and no later than 12 months from the date of the first meeting (non-binding recommendations for modifications or additional work may also be specified by the doctoral advising committee).

When the student fails to meet the expectations for the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment (Outcome 2 or 3), the PAC shall provide the following in writing and a copy provided to the Department Graduate Office:

- Any actions that the committee *requires* the student to complete before they are judged to have fully passed the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment; and
- A precise deadline for completing these requirements and how new materials are to be evaluated (i.e., by whom and in what context).

### Evaluation Criteria

1. **Goal Formulation:** Statements of professional and academic goals directly relevant to student's proposed program objectives. These statements should go beyond generic statements of program competencies, and apply directly to the student's personal aspirations. Goal statements should be carefully thought out, be directly relevant to the student's academic and professional situation, be realistic, and demonstrate that the

student is actively considering his or her own learning and the implications for the future, and not simply "going through the motions" of taking courses and accumulating credits.

2. **Discipline Breadth:** Student demonstrates the ability to grasp and synthesize core disciplinary concepts and theories, for example, as introduced in Geog600. Student thinks critically and understands problems or texts in a disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) context.
3. **Research Competency:** Student demonstrates with course papers and other course work proficiency in essential methods and tools pertaining to Geographical Sciences more generally and the chosen dissertation research specifically.
4. **Analytical and Integrative Thinking:** Student demonstrates with products, and in discussion with committee members, that he or she has engaged in higher order, scholarly thinking that goes beyond attaining understandings required for individual courses. Such thinking may include evaluating components and subcomponents of program courses and activities, and evaluating how each relates to others. This thinking also allows the student to arrive at understandings that go across individual courses and activities to gain broader general understandings relevant to student goals.
5. **Reflective Thinking:** Student demonstrates skills at self-evaluation with respect to program objectives and goal statements. Student is able to reflect upon different activities, consider student's own products, and appropriately evaluate them, attributing more successful and less successful outcomes appropriately to student efforts, prior understandings, planning, and procedures. Based on this thinking, the student is able to identify how to improve performance and further develop skills and competencies in future endeavors. Reflective thinking should go beyond individual evaluation of products to evaluation of student overall performance in pursuit of academic and professional goals.
6. **Effective Communication:** Student demonstrates, with products and in discussion with committee members, that they are able to write and speak clearly and at an appropriate level for doctoral study

*NOTE: The full portfolio guidelines are published separately on the department's Intranet website (PhD Students link, PAC link).*

#### *Scoring Rubric and Guidelines*

**Does not meet standards (1 point in scoring rubric)** *Student does not demonstrate readiness to proceed to the proposal development stage of the doctoral program.*

1. Goal statements are not clear or relevant; evidence for meeting goals is not present.
2. The student does not demonstrate the breadth in the field of geography necessary for advancing to dissertation studies.
3. Research or professional competencies require additional preparation even though the coursework has been completed.
4. The student failed to demonstrate adequate evidence of analytical and integrative thinking in reflecting on the program at the end of coursework, especially with respect to upcoming dissertation work, or on integrity and ethical practice.
5. Student fails to demonstrate an ability for self-evaluation of goals and objectives, projects and writing.
6. Responses to questions are overly general and disorganized, vague, or contain factual errors. Written products disorganized, unfocused and may contain frequent grammatical errors.

**Meets standards (2 points in scoring rubric)** *Student demonstrates readiness to proceed to the proposal development stage of the doctoral program.*

1. Goal statements are clear and relevant; evidence of goals having been met is present.
2. The student demonstrates adequate breadth in the field of geography necessary for advancing to dissertation studies.
3. Research or professional competencies have been met to an adequate degree of competence. Integrity and ethical practice are evident in research and/or professional activities.
4. The student presents adequate evidence of analytical and integrative thinking in reflecting on the program at the end of coursework, especially with respect to upcoming dissertation work, and on integrity and ethical practice.
5. Student demonstrates ability for self-evaluation of goals and objectives, projects and writing.
6. Responses to question are more general, but still accurate; analyses go beyond the obvious. Written products generally organized and focused, with few grammatical errors, showing good use of figures, citations, etc.

**Exceeds standards (3 points in scoring rubric)** *Student clearly demonstrates a high degree of readiness to proceed to the proposal development stage of the doctoral program.*

1. Goal statements are clear and relevant; evidence of goals having been met to a high degree of competence may be present.
2. The student demonstrates substantial breadth in the field of geography necessary for advancing to dissertation studies.
3. Research or professional competencies may have been met to a high degree of competence. Integrity and ethical practice are clearly evident in research and/or professional activities.
4. The student demonstrates evidence of excellence in analytical and integrative thinking in reflecting on the program at the end of coursework, especially with respect to upcoming dissertation work integrity and ethical practice.
5. Student demonstrates excellent ability for self-evaluation of goals and objectives, projects and writing.
6. Responses to questions are specific and accurate. Written products well organized and focused with effective use of graphics, citations.

Scoring the CPA

The following Rubric Score Sheet will be used for the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment

Evaluation Category	Score			
	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	PAC
1. Goal Formulation				
2. Discipline Breadth				
3. Research Competency				
4. Analytical and Integrative Thinking				
5. Reflective Thinking				
6. Effective Communication				

Each PAC member will independently score the student's portfolio in each Evaluation Category (based on the criteria on the scoring rubrics guidelines above):

1. Does not meet expectations;
2. Meets expectations;
3. Exceeds expectations.

The PAC score will be based upon the majority score awarded by two out of three committee members (e.g., if the member scores are 1,1,2, then the PAC score = 1). Note: a scoring of (1,2,3) results in an overall score of 2.5 for a criterion.

#### Assigning the outcome of the assessment

The following is used to assign the outcome of the comprehensive assessment.

1. Outcome 1: Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment is passed: The student receives a PAC score of 2 or greater in **all 6** Evaluation Criteria.
2. Outcome 2: Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment is conditionally passed: The student receives a PAC score of 1 in **no more than 2** Evaluation Criteria. If only 1 criterion does not meet expectations the student is conditionally passed. If two criteria do not meet expectations the PAC may choose to place the student in Outcome 3 (fail) depending on the criteria that were not passed and their overall assessment of the student.
3. Outcome 3: Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment is failed: The student receives a PAC score of 1 in **more than 2** Evaluation Criteria.

#### Discontinuation

A student who fails their second Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment (i.e. receive Outcome 3 twice) will not be allowed to continue work towards the dissertation. Students in Outcome 2 who fail to satisfy the requirements as given by their PAC in the specified time (and thus receive an Outcome 3) may also be prevented from continuing work towards a dissertation at the discretion of the PAC.

## Appendix C - Procedures for Convening and Conducting a Dissertation Proposal Defense

A proposal defense typically lasts no more than two hours.

### Dissertation Proposal Defense Organization

- a. Selection of time and location of the defense is provided by the chair of the DSAC. PhD proposal defenses should be held at a time agreed by members of the student's DSAC and at a time conducive to attendance by other members of the Department and Campus.
- b. The dissertation proposal defense will be announced by the student at least one week (5 working days) before the scheduled time, and a digital copy of the dissertation proposal must be uploaded to the Department's Google Docs share drive.
- c. Conduct of the defense will consist of :
  - i. **Part 1, which will be a public presentation by the candidate** on the main aspects of the research reported in the dissertation proposal. During Part 1, questions from the audience to the candidate will be permitted. For questions from persons who are not members of the DSAC, the Chair of the DSAC will have discretion to decide whether such questions are germane to the topic of the dissertation proposal and how much time will be allotted for the answers.
  - ii. **Part 2, which will be a formal examination of the candidate** by the DSAC. This part will be open only to the DSAC, other members of the Graduate Faculty, and graduate students from the candidate's graduate program. During Part 2, only members of the DEC will be permitted to ask questions.
  - iii. **Attendance at the final discussion and vote** will be limited to the members of the Dissertation Examining Committee.
- d. The examining committee has no authority to change this document or department rules unless decided by the department.
- e. The DSAC will place equal emphasis on testing background knowledge pertaining to the research topic and the suitability of the research proposal.

### DSAC Members participation

All members of the DSAC are expected to be present for the entire period of the Dissertation Proposal Defense. However, if a member is not able to attend or be present for the entire defense due to unforeseen circumstances, the Dissertation Proposal Defense may still be held if the DSAC has more than four members. The candidate and the committee chair (or at least one of the co-chairs) must all be present in the examination room. If necessary, other members of the committee may participate from one or more remote sites as long as the conferencing software supports the rules of the conduct of the defense. The Graduate Director must approve permission for remote participation in advance. The request for remote participation must provide a compelling reason and/or explanation as to why each remote committee member cannot be physically present. A defense may also still be held if one (and only one) member is physically absent, but is able to participate via audio or video conferencing. A minimum of three members of the Doctoral Student Committee must be physically present at the defense.

### Areas Assessed in Qualifications and Proposal

- a. Presentation of a proposed research topic with the same degree detail as is normally given in the introductory sections of research papers
- b. Relating the specific research area in a. to the broader context of the current state of knowledge in the proposed field
- c. Clearly stating one or more research questions and put forth a practical work plan to

answer these.

- d. Demonstration that the data and necessary research tools are available, or could be acquired, and are understood.
- e. Possessing the necessary background knowledge to complete the proposed research.

### Dissertation Proposal Defense Conclusion

After discussing the qualifications of the student and the dissertation proposal and its defense, the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee has the following options:

- a. To accept the qualifications of the student and the dissertation proposal without any recommendations for improvements or changes and sign the *Report of Doctoral Student Advisory Committee on the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal*.
- b. To accept the qualifications of the student with recommendations for improvements in his/her qualifications in specific areas and, except for the chair, sign the *Report of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee on the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal*. The chair will certify that the student has taken the necessary steps to improve his/her knowledge in the specified areas, and, upon his or her approval, sign the *Report*.
- c. To recommend that the student make improvements in his/her qualifications in specific areas and not sign the *Report of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee on the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal* until the student has demonstrated the recommended improvements.
- d. To accept the dissertation proposal with recommendations for changes and, except for the chair, sign the *Report of the Department Committee on the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal*. The chair will check that the changes to the dissertation proposal have been made, and, upon his or her approval, sign the *Report*.
- e. To recommend revisions to the dissertation proposal and not sign the *Report of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee on the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal* until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised dissertation proposal for the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee's approval. The Doctoral Student Advisory Committee members sign the *Report* if they approve the revised dissertation proposal.
- f. To recommend improvements to the student's qualifications or revisions to the dissertation proposal and convene a second meeting of the DSAC to review the dissertation proposal and complete the student's Examination.
- g. To rule the student's qualifications or the dissertation proposal (including its Examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails to Advance to Candidacy

### Pass/Fail Criteria

The student passes the Dissertation Proposal Defense if all, or all but one, member of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee agree to sign a *Report of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee on the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal*, before or after the approval of recommended improvements or changes. Two or more negative votes constitute a failure of the candidate to meet the Dissertation Proposal Defense requirement regardless of the size of the committee.

### Notification of Examination Results

Following the Examination, the chair of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee must inform the student of the outcome of the Examination.

The chair signs a *Report of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee on the Dissertation Proposal Defense* indicating which of the above alternatives has been adopted.

- a. A copy of this statement is to be included in the student's file at the Department of Geographical Sciences Graduate Office.
- b. A copy is given to the student and to the Graduate Director. If a student fails the

Dissertation Proposal Defense, within one week (5 working days) of the Examination the advisor/chair of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee will submit an attachment to the *Report of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee on the Dissertation Proposal Defense* that:

- a. Explains the areas of deficiencies identified by the members of the committee.
- b. If revisions to the proposal are requested and/or improvements in the qualifications of the students are required as a condition for passing the examination, the specific revisions and/or improvements will be summarized in writing and attached to the report.

In either of these cases, the Chair of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee will also provide the student with a copy of the reasons or the recommended areas of revision and/or improvement.

#### Second Dissertation Proposal Defense

A second Dissertation Proposal Defense is available (upon approval of the Chair of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee and the Graduate Director) provided that the student is in good standing at the time of the second examination. If the student fails this second examination, or if a second examination is not permitted, the student's admission to the graduate program is terminated.

#### Requirements Prior to Formal Admission to Candidacy

After successfully defending their proposal, but before *Application for Admission to Candidacy* form is filed with the Graduate School:

- a. The student must submit a poster of his/her research summarizing the dissertation proposal to be installed in Room 1158 and with their profile on the department website. Contact the Graduate Office if you have questions concerning format or need access to the plotter. The advisor must review the poster.
- b. The student must provide bio information (including a list of publications) and add their profile to the department website, if not already done so

## **Appendix D - Procedures for Convening and Conducting a Dissertation Defense**

### *Nomination of a Dissertation Examining Committee*

This committee is normally the same as the DSAC and if a Dean's representative had not yet been appointed, they need to be included in this committee. Per the "Graduate School Requirements Applicable to all Doctoral Degrees," by the prescribed deadline and at least six weeks before the date of the oral Dissertation Defense, the student needs to formally nominate his/her Dissertation Examining Committee. This involves submitting a completed and signed form to the Graduate School that contains the names of the committee members, the title of the dissertation, and the date of the defense, and is done through the Registrar's office.

### *Presence of Dissertation Examining Committee at Dissertation Defense*

Oral examinations must be attended by all members of the student's officially established Dissertation Examining Committee as approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. All examinations must be open to all members of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. Under department policy, the defense is also open to the public. Under normal circumstances, all members of a Dissertation Examining Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire dissertation defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances. Remote participation by video teleconferencing is permitted if the advisor follows the required procedures outlined by the Graduate School:  
<https://gradschool.umd.edu/remotedefenserequest>

### *Style and format of Dissertations*

Style and format of dissertations must follow the Campus Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide.  
([https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/Forms/etd\\_style\\_guide\\_2021\\_v2.pdf](https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/Forms/etd_style_guide_2021_v2.pdf) g )

### *Dissertation Copies*

In addition to providing each member of the Dissertation Examining Committee with a copy of the dissertation, the student should also upload a copy of the dissertation to the Departmental Google Docs share drive.

### *Oral Defense*

A dissertation defense typically lasts no more than two hours. The procedures for conducting the oral defense are the same as those for the defense of the dissertation proposal, see Appendix

### *Conclusion of the Defense*

At the conclusion of the defense, the Committee has the outcome options listed under the "Conclusion of the Examination" section of this page, which also outline the pass/fail criteria:  
<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/doctoral-degrees-policies/>

### *Exit Survey*

Upon successful completion of the defense and fulfillment of all requirements for the doctoral degree, the student will complete an exit survey and file with the graduate office.

## Appendix E: Grievance Process for the Graduate Program

The Department of Geographical Sciences (GEOG) at UMD is a scholarly community whose aim is to create an environment conducive to learning. This is accomplished through the promotion of responsibility and encouragement of honesty, integrity, and respect among students, faculty and staff assuring that all act in accordance with our behavioral standards while supporting individual rights. We are committed to the principles of truth, objectivity, fairness, honesty, and free inquiry that includes the freedom to express careful and reasoned criticism of data and opinion. As a citizen of the academic community, each member of the GEOG community is expected to assume the obligations of responsible citizenship.

It is the policy of the Department to implement conduct standards in a fair, respectful, and equitable manner. We are also committed to serving as an advocate for, and resource to, student victims of crimes, harassment and other traumatic experiences.

### EXISTING POLICIES

It is the policy of the University and the Department to maintain the campus as a place of work for faculty, staff and students, free from all forms of harassment. Harassment in the workplace or the educational environment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. The University has established policies and reporting processes that address Title IX complaints, sexual misconduct and discrimination. These policies can be found:

- [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Non-Discrimination Policy](#)

The University has established policies and grievance processes for students who believe that their academic performance has been unfairly evaluated. For graduate students, the policy/process can be found:

- [Arbitrary and Capricious Grading Policies](#)

In addition, the Graduate Council has established grievance policies and procedures for Graduate Assistants who believe that they have been unfairly treated in respect to their employment and/or duties as a Research, Teaching or Administrative Graduate Assistant. The policy/procedure can be found:

- [Graduate Assistants Grievance Procedures](#)

### INFORMAL PROCESS

We believe that it is best to facilitate, with dignity, the resolution of disputes and concerns at the lowest level possible; it is best to attempt a resolution with the parties involved. To assist in such mediation, you may wish to contact the Graduate Student Ombuds Officer:

**Mark A. Shayman** [shayman@umd.edu](mailto:shayman@umd.edu) 2100A Lee Building 301.405.3132  
<http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/Ombuds/>

## FORMAL PROCESS

If a graduate student believes that they have experienced treatment that is unethical, grossly unjust, uncivil, or otherwise creates a hostile learning or working environment from a faculty member, a staff member, or another student, the student should attempt to resolve the matters locally, collegially, and informally. If the issue has not been resolved to the graduate student's satisfaction or the treatment cannot be stopped through informal means, the graduate student may elect to file a formal grievance.

The Graduate Council has also established a grievance policy/process for graduate students who have a legitimate dispute or concern not covered by University policies which can be found:

- Graduate Student Grievance Policy

If you are unable to achieve a mutually satisfactory resolution informally, then the next step is to initiate the formal grievance process. This process is for students who believe that they have been unfairly treated with respect to their employment and/or duties as a Research, Teaching or Administrative Graduate Assistant. The process, which is conducted with strict confidentiality, within the Department is as follows:

Phase 1. The process begins with the filing of a formal grievance with the Director of Graduate Studies:

1. The student shall provide in writing a request to initiate a formal grievance process. This request must contain a clear description of the facts giving rise to the grievance including the following elements: names of the parties involved; date(s), time(s) and location(s) of the actions/incidents; names of witnesses; and the desired resolution of the grievance. The request must be signed.
2. The written grievance must be filed by an enrolled graduate student before the first day of the next semester in which the incident occurred or within 30 calendar days of the student's withdrawal or dismissal.
3. The Director of Graduate Studies will conduct an investigation and provide a determination within 30 business days of the filing of the grievance. This investigation can include interviewing the parties involved and consulting with appropriate campus administrators (such as University Counsel). The decision shall be provided in writing to the parties involved.
4. If the decision is accepted by the parties, the matter is deemed settled. If not, then the decision of the Director of Graduate Studies can be appealed in Phase 2 of the process.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that if the grievance is with the Director of Graduate Studies, then the filing would be with the Chair of the Department

Phase 2. If the resolution proffered by the Director of Graduate Studies is deemed unacceptable, the grieving party can file an appeal with the Department Chair as follows:

1. Either party may initiate the appeal process by sending a written appeal to the Chair of the Department within 30 calendar days of the announcement of the decision by the Director of Graduate Studies.
2. The written appeal must be signed and include the original description of the facts, a clear explanation of why the party filing the appeal found the outcome(s) of the Director of Graduate Studies proceedings and decision(s) unsatisfactory, and a

statement of the desired resolution/remedy.

3. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within five business days of receipt of the written appeal.
4. The Chair will proceed with the following procedure

The Chair will meet with the parties involved, either individually or together, before reaching a decision. The Chair can confidentially consult with the appropriate persons who may be knowledgeable about the policies, practices and issues involved. The Chair shall endeavor to convey a written decision and, where appropriate, the remedy, to the parties involved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the letter of appeal. The written decision of the Chair will contain a statement of the issues, the Chair's findings of fact, the controlling policy provisions, the Chair's assessment regarding the merits of the grievance, and a disposition of the grievance, including the remedy and/or disciplinary actions.

5. If the decision is accepted by the parties, the matter is deemed settled. If not, then the decision of the Chair can be appealed in Phase 3 of the process.

Phase 3. If the resolution proffered by the Chair of the department is deemed unacceptable, the grieving party can file an appeal with the Dean of the College as follows:

1. Either party may initiate the appeal process by sending a written appeal to the Dean of the College within 30 calendar days of the announcement of the decision by the Chair of the Department.
2. The written appeal must be signed and include the original description of the facts, a clear explanation of why the party filing the appeal found the outcome(s) of both the Director of Graduate Studies and Chair proceedings and decision(s) unsatisfactory, and a statement of the desired resolution/remedy.
3. The Dean of the College will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within five business days of receipt of the written appeal.
4. The Dean of the College (or designee) will proceed with one of two options:
  - a. The Dean or his/her designee will meet with the parties involved, either individually or together, before reaching a decision. The Dean or his/her designee can confidentially consult with the appropriate persons who may be knowledgeable about the policies, practices and issues involved. The Dean or his/her designee shall endeavor to convey a written decision and, where appropriate, the remedy, to the parties involved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the letter of appeal. The written decision of the Dean or his/her designee will contain a statement of the issues, the Dean's or his/her designee's findings of fact,

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<sup>3</sup> If the grievance is with the Department Chair then the appeal will be sent to the Associate Chair the controlling policy provisions, the Chair's assessment regarding the merits of the grievance, and a disposition of the grievance, including the remedy and/or disciplinary actions. or

- b. The Dean or his/her designee will convene a panel of two graduate faculty members and one graduate student (or staff person if one of the parties is a member of the staff) to confidentially review the matter and make a recommendation to the Dean or his/her designee. The panel will conduct its review in an impartial and unbiased manner. The Dean or his/her designee will

provide a copy of the letter of appeal and other documentation as appropriate. The panel will offer to meet with the parties involved, either individually or together, before reaching a decision. The panel can confidentially consult with the appropriate persons who may be knowledgeable about the policies, practices and issues involved. The panel shall endeavor to convey a written decision and, where appropriate, the remedy, to the parties involved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the letter of appeal. The written report of the panel will contain a statement of the issues, the panel's findings of fact, the controlling policy provisions, the panel's assessment regarding the merits of the grievance, and a recommended disposition of the grievance, including a suggested remedy and/or disciplinary actions. The Dean or his/her designee shall endeavor to convey a written decision and, where appropriate, the remedy, to the parties involved within 15 calendar days of receipt of the panel's report.

5. If the decision is accepted by the parties, the matter is deemed settled. If not, then the decision of the Dean can be appealed to the Dean of the Graduate School as set forth in graduate policy (discussed above).

In the instance that one of the parties involved in the grievance is either the Director of Graduate Studies or the Chair of the Department respectively, the student may file the grievance with either the Chair or the Associate Chair of the Department. The student may also choose to file the grievance with the Dean of the College. If the Dean is a party to the grievance, the student may file the grievance directly with the Dean of the Graduate School.

Remedies suggested by the filing party must be reasonable and within actions that can be taken in accordance with university policy and appropriate statutes. The Department will endeavor to reach a just and equitable resolution in each case.

Within limitations that govern an ordered intellectual community, the Department accords its members freedom of inquiry, expression and action. Along with this freedom, is the obligation to do so responsibly. When that bond is broken, we are committed to addressing the issues and concerns as outlined above.