

# MASTER OF GEOSCIENCE IN GEOSCIENCE

The College of Arts and Sciences offers a Master of Geoscience (MGS) program in two modalities. One is delivered on-campus and the other is approved for delivery via asynchronous distance education technology.

The distance education modality is especially appropriate for professionals in geoscience or related fields seeking advanced training. Structured degree programs are defined in three areas:

- Geographic Information Science and Technology, oriented toward geospatial needs of the oil and gas industry, is housed in the Department of Geography;
- Petroleum Data Management, oriented toward data and database needs of the energy industry, is housed in the Department of Geography;
- Ocean Data Science, oriented toward data science needs in ocean-related industries and agencies, is housed in the Department of Oceanography.

The on-campus modality offers opportunities to study a broad range of environmental, energy and geoscience topics. The program is not intended as a teacher-certification curriculum. Students admitted to this program are housed in a primary department but may receive advising from across the College. All documents submitted to the Graduate and Professional School must be signed by the student's department head in their designated home department.

## Program Requirements

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## Student's Advisory Committee

### On-Campus Degree Program

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework, the student will consult with the head of the department concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The student's advisory committee for the master's degree will consist of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty representative of the student's fields of study and research. The chair or one of the co-chairs of the advisory committee must be from the student's "home" department. The "home" department must be one of the two areas of specialization comprising the major. At least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student's "home" department. The department head will sign the degree plan.

The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve.

Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members located off-campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair), with a member as the chair. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's degree program, has the responsibility for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student 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 her/his academic program and located on the respective Texas A&M University campus, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. If the committee chair is on an approved leave of absence, s/he can remain as chair without a co-chair for up to one year with written approval of the Department Head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

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 activities relating to an internship or professional paper and is registered for courses such as 684, 692 or 693, 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, any professional study or project, 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 Graduate and Professional School.

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*.

### Distance Education Degree Program

The distance education modality requires an advisory committee to be comprised by the designated coordinator of distance education in the Department of Geography or Department of Oceanography and the Department Head of the Department of Geography or the Department of Oceanography.

## Degree Plan

### On-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

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 the Graduate and Professional School prior to the deadlines imposed by the student's college, and no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination.

This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website <https://ogsdps.tamu.edu> (<https://ogsdps.tamu.edu/>).

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 is approved the Graduate and Professional School.

## Credit Requirement

### On-Campus Degree Program

The minimum requirements for the degree are 36 hours of coursework and a satisfactory final comprehensive oral examination. A student is required to take at least 18 hours of credit in Geosciences in two areas of specialization. The areas of specialization for this degree are Atmospheric Sciences, Geography, Geology and Geophysics and Oceanography. A specialization consists of at least 6 credit hours. In addition, a student is required to complete a 6 credit hour supporting field in a discipline other than the two specialization fields.

### Distance Education Degree Program

The minimum requirements for the degree are 36 hours of coursework. The student is required to fulfill a capstone course in which an on-campus presence is encouraged but not required; no final examination is required.

## Transfer of Credit

### On-Campus Degree Program

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 above 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 might 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 preceding 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 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 GPA.

### Distance Education Degree Program

The distance education modality does not allow transfer of credit.

## Limitations on the Use of Transfer, Extension and Certain Other Courses

### On-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

Some departments may have more restrictive requirements for transfer work. If otherwise acceptable, certain courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the master's degree under the following limitations.

- The maximum number of credit hours which may be considered for transfer credit is the greater of 12 hours or one-third (1/3) of the total hours of a degree plan. The following restrictions apply:
  - Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate 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 student was in degree-seeking status at Texas A&M University, or the student was in degree-seeking status at the institution at which the courses were taken; and if the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution.
  - Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable for degree plan credit.
- The maximum number of credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate non-degree (G6) classification at Texas A&M University which may be considered for application to the degree plan is 12.
- A zero credit 684 or 685 course is only allowed for non-thesis option master's students. A zero credit 681 course can be used for either thesis or non-thesis option master's students. Other courses, including 691 research hours, are not eligible for zero credit.
- Any combination of 684 and 685 may not exceed 25 percent of the total credit hour requirement shown on the individual degree plan:
  - A maximum of 4 hours of 684 (Professional Internship) and
  - Up to 8 hours of 685 (Directed Studies).
- A maximum of 2 hours of Seminar (681).
- A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate courses (300- or 400-level).
- For graduate courses of three weeks' duration or less, taken at other institutions, up to 1 hour of credit may be obtained for each five-day week of coursework. Each week of coursework must include at least 15 contact hours.
- No credit hours of 690 (Theory of Research), 691 (Research) or 695 (Frontiers in Research) may be used.
- Continuing education courses may not be used for graduate credit.
- Extension courses are not acceptable for credit.
- For non-distance degree programs, no more than 50 percent of the credit hours required for the program may be completed through distance education courses.
- To receive a graduate degree from Texas A&M University, students must earn one-third or more of the credits through the institution's own direct instruction. This limitation also applies to joint degree programs.

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.

## Final Examination

### On-Campus Degree Program

The candidate must pass a final examination by dates announced each semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar. The Graduate and Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellation. See the Graduate and Professional

School website at <http://grad.tamu.edu/Buttons/Calendars> (<http://grad.tamu.edu/Buttons/Calendars/>). To be eligible to take the final examination, a student's GPA 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 no unabsolved grades of D, F or U can occur 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 C 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.

The candidate is not eligible to petition for an exemption from the final examination. A 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 for the examination. Examinations which are not completed and reported as satisfactory to the Graduate and Professional School 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 exam cannot be held prior to the mid point of the semester if questions on the exam are based on courses in which the student is currently enrolled.

The final examination covers all work taken on the degree plan and at the option of the committee may be written or oral or both. The examination is conducted by the student's advisory committee as finally constituted. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the major professor, 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. A department can have a stricter requirement provided there is consistency within all degree programs within a department.

Exam results 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 also be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

#### **Distance Education Degree Program**

The distance education modality does not require a final examination.

## **Additional Requirements**

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## **Residence**

### **On-Campus Degree Program**

In partial fulfillment of the residence requirement for the degree of Master of Geoscience, the student must complete 9 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 with approval of the Graduate and Professional School, a student may be granted exemption from this requirement. Such a petition must be approved, however, 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 Graduate and Professional School.

See Residence Requirements (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#degreerequirementstext>).

#### **Distance Education Degree Program**

The distance education modality does not have any residence requirement.

## **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.

## **Foreign Languages**

A foreign language is not required for the Master of Geoscience degree.

## **Internship or Practicum**

In the case of on-campus students, the final examination is not to be administered until all other requirements for the degree, including any internship, have been substantially completed.

## **Application for Degree**

For information on applying for your degree, please visit the Graduation (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#degreerequirementstext>) section.