



Graduate Program Handbook 2022-2023

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Geography Graduate Faculty

Timothy Assal (F-4) – remote sensing, ecosystem disturbance, vegetation dynamics, biogeography, natural resources management, landscape ecology

Lisa Bhungalia (F-3) – Middle East, political, development, feminist geography

Amoaba Gooden (A-3) – African Caribbean Transnational Communities; Gender, identity and African Diaspora; African Diaspora social networks as determinants of health

David Kaplan (F-4) – Nationalism and Ethnicity; French and Italian Geography; Urban Planning; Transportation; Segregation

Cameron Lee (F-4) – Climate Change; Synoptic Climatology; Applied Climatology

Jay Lee (F-4) – GIS; Geospatial Analysis; Urban Operations Research; Geography of China; Spatial and Temporal Simulation

Jennifer Mapes (F-4) – small towns, sustainability, planning, community economics, visualization & interactive mapping

Mandy Munro-Stasiuk (F-4) – Glacial and Karst Geomorphology, Remote Sensing, Geoarchaeology

Christopher Post (F-4) - Cultural Landscape, Historical Geography, North America, Commemorative Justice, Company Towns

Rebecca Parylak Ruthrauff (A-1) – Physical Geography, Climatology, Precipitation Trends

Andy Scholl (A-1) – Biogeography, Landscape ecology, Vegetation dynamics, Environmental geography, GIS, Remote sensing

Scott Sheridan (F-4) – Climate and Health, Climate Change, Synoptic
Climatology

Sarah Smiley (F-4) – Sub-Saharan Africa, Urban Geography, Cultural
Geography

James Tyner (F-4) – Political, Population, Gender & Race

Aimee Ward (A-3) – Transportation, public health

Emariana Widner (A-1) – Biogeography, Urban Ecology, Environmental
Geography, Computational Modeling

He Yin (F-3) – remote sensing, land science, forestry

Geography Graduate Committee

David Kaplan – Graduate Coordinator

Tim Assal

Cameron Lee

Sarah Smiley

Graduate Mission

Congratulations on your admittance to the graduate program in Geography. Our goal is to ensure that you will have a successful career at Kent State University, and we hope that you will enjoy your time here with us. If you have any questions or if there is anything I or any other member of the staff can do to assist you, please let us know. We will be happy to help. Please keep this handbook with you for the duration of your program as it will provide you with all the key information for you to succeed. Also check the geography website for updates related to the program.

www.kent.edu/geography/graduate)

Scott Sheridan (Professor and Chair, Geography).

The M.S. in Geography program prepares graduate students for careers in both the academic field and non-academic jobs in various private and governmental agencies, in areas such as urban/economic geography, social geography, physical/environmental geography, and geographic information technology. Students learn geographic thought, research techniques, and topical specialties while preparing to conduct original research. Within this broad framework, the program is sufficiently flexible to meet individual career objectives. The M.S. in geography is designed to be a two academic year program.

The Doctoral program in geography exposes students to advanced theories and techniques in contemporary geographic research. Students are expected to conduct original research that withstands the scrutiny of a community of scholars. The Ph.D. in geography is designed to be a three to four academic year program.

Admissions

The Admissions Process

Kent State's application process is electronic. Submit your application at www.kent.edu/admissions/apply/; all materials should be sent directly to the relevant address below. Do not send material to the Department unless specifically requested.

- *Domestic applicants*: Division of Graduate Studies, Kent State University, Cartwright Hall, 650 Hilltop Drive, Kent, OH 44242
- *International applicants*: Office of Global Education, Kent State University, 106 Van Campen Hall, 625 Loop Rd, Kent, OH 44242

You must submit the following items to be considered for admission into our program. Please note that the file is assembled by the Division of Graduate Studies and sent to the Department only when it is complete; thus, we will not see applications missing any components.

The semester before you apply, we strongly encourage you to contact any faculty member(s) you are interested in working with. These communications with faculty members will help determine your fit within the program. For any questions about the graduate program in general, please contact the graduate coordinator.

Required Items

1. Official copies of all post-secondary transcripts,
2. A statement of research interests (with a maximum length of 2 pages),
3. A current résumé or CV,
4. Three letters of recommendation,
5. A Test of English score – TOEFL, IELTS. Duolingo. Applicants from countries where English is the official language are exempt from

this requirement. In addition, applicants are also excluded from this requirement if they have completed a higher-education degree at a university in an exempt country listed here: <https://www.kent.edu/admissions/waive-english-language-requirement>

Optional Items

6. GRE score (official copy sent from ETS),
7. A brief writing sample, no more than 5 pages.

Do Not Include

- Financial Documents (these will be requested by Graduate Admissions for every international applicant accepted into the program, but they should NOT be part of your application package).
- Certificates of any kind
- Photocopies of your passport
- Writing samples over 5 pages.

Admission evaluation criteria

The Graduate Committee evaluates all applications. The criteria below should be considered as guidance in terms of what faculty look for in prospective students.

Applicants must have a Bachelor's degree completed by the time they enter the M.S. program. Applicants must have a Master's degree completed within one semester after their entry into the Ph.D. program.

Applications are assessed on the following criteria:

- *Coursework.* An applicant's coursework should include at least the equivalent of a minor in geography (15 credit hours) for M.S. applicants, and a Master's degree in Geography for Ph.D. applicants. Exceptions may be made for students who major in a closely related discipline, especially when aligned with their stated research interests. Exceptions may also be made for students who major in a related field and come from institutions without a geography program. Applicants not meeting these criteria may still be admitted conditionally and be required to make up undergraduate coursework as determined by the graduate faculty.
- *Grades.* The university has minimum GPA requirements of 3.0 (out of 4.0) at the undergraduate level and 3.0 at the graduate level; no students will be admitted with grades below these values. Most of our admitted students have GPAs well above these criteria. An undergraduate GPA of 3.3 or greater is strongly recommended, with a GPA of 3.5 or greater optimal. A graduate-level GPA of 3.5 or greater is strongly recommended, with a graduate GPA of 3.7 or greater optimal.
- *Prior research.* For Ph.D. applicants, we favor a master's degree in which a thesis or analogous research project is completed.

- *Statement of research interests.* Statements must address the following four aspects: (1) your academic background and past experience, (2) your research plan and career goals, (3) how Kent State will help you achieve your goals, (4) which faculty members you would be interested in working with.
- *Compatibility with faculty research.* For Ph.D. applicants, we require that at least one faculty member expresses a willingness to advise; students are thus strongly encouraged to communicate with potential advisors during the application process. M.S. applicants should also state clear research interests and potential advisors and are also encouraged to communicate with faculty prior to applying.
- *Strength of recommendation letters.* While letters from workplace supervisors or other professional contacts are allowed, applicants should strive to obtain at least two letters from professors.
- *Measures of English proficiency.* The department's minimum acceptable scores are a TOEFL (79), MELAB (77), IELTS (6.5), or Duolingo (105). Students with scores below this level will not be admitted. For purposes of funding, the minimum scores are a TOEFL (94), MELAB (82), IELTS (7.0), or Duolingo (115). You can waive these requirements if you were educated in the countries listed here: <https://www.kent.edu/admissions/waive-english-language-requirement>
- *GRE score.* GRE scores are optional and not required for admission. If applicants choose to submit GRE scores, they will be considered as part of the admissions criteria. Applicants who choose not to submit GRE scores will be given full consideration and their applications will be considered based on the required criteria.
- *Writing sample.* A writing sample of no more than 5 pages may be submitted. It is recommended that this sample relate to the stated research interests.

Application deadlines

The department prefers to admit students to begin in the fall semester, although spring and summer admissions are possible. For fall semester, our primary application deadline is February 1st. This deadline means that all materials must be received and processed by the university by this date; we thus encourage applicants (especially international applicants) to begin the process much earlier. Applicants whose applications are complete by this deadline will be given primary consideration for funding opportunities in the department. Our final fall application deadline is July 1st, although these later applicants will not be considered for funding.

Applications for spring and summer admission are due on November 1st and April 1st, respectively; please note that no funding is awarded for students beginning in these terms, although they would be eligible to apply for funding for the following fall.

Admission decisions

Faculty evaluate all applications promptly. For students applying during the regular cycle by February 1st, planning to begin during the following fall semester, decisions on admission will be made by late February. For students applying at other times, a decision is usually made within one month of the completion of the application.

There are two types of admission to our program: regular and conditional. Regular admission imposes no limits on the student's entry into the program. Conditional admission requires that the students meet a certain set of criteria (usually a minimum GPA in select classes during their first semester in residence) to gain full entry into our program. Conditional admission is usually granted to students who show potential but have either inadequate backgrounds in geography, or lower grades than preferred. **Note that the Department does not offer conditional admission to students that have not achieved a passing TOEFL score; one must obtain an acceptable score prior to application into the program.**

Applicants admitted to the program before the completion of their previous degree program will see their status online as being "Conditional – Transcript". All admitted Ph.D. students must defend their Master's thesis within one month of entering the program and provide a final transcript from the previous institution showing the awarding of the degree within the first semester upon entering the program. Students will not be allowed to register for a second semester of classes until this transcript is received and such students will lose their funding.

Matriculation into Ph.D. Program for current M.S. students

Students that are currently enrolled in Kent State's M.S. program in geography do not need to file a full application to be considered for the Ph.D. program. Rather, the matriculation process is presently conducted within the department. An interested student should obtain a matriculation form from the Department Office, and submit it to the Graduate Coordinator, along with:

1. A copy of your Kent State transcript,
2. Two letters of recommendation, and
3. A new statement of research interests (with recommended length of 1 to 2 pages).

All applications are evaluated by the Graduate Committee, utilizing the same criteria described above for regular admission.

Students have one month from matriculation to complete all requirements for the M.S. degree. If they fail to meet this deadline, they will not be allowed to register for a second semester of classes until this transcript is received and such students will lose their funding.

Master of Science (M.S.) Program

Note: *The Master of Science Program is identical to the former Master of Arts Program*

Program Requirements

The M.S. program requires a total of 30 credit hours: 24 of these hours are taken for letter-graded (i.e. not S/U) course work, and 6 hours for the M.S. thesis. A minimum of 18 hours of graded work must be taken in GEOG courses.

There are two required core courses that all M.S. students must take, totaling 6 credit hours:

GEOG 60800 – Development of Geographic Thought

GEOG 69701 – Research and Presentation of Geographic Data

In addition, students must also take at least 6 credit hours of methods courses:

GEOG 50292 – Field Experience in Geography

GEOG 59070 – Geographic Information Science

GEOG 59072 – GIS and Health

GEOG 59073 – Environmental Data Analysis in R

GEOG 59075 – GIS: Urban and Economic Applications

GEOG 59076 – Spatial Programming

GEOG 59078 – GIS and Environmental Hazards

GEOG 59080 – Advanced GIS

GEOG 59085 – Web and Mobile GIS

GEOG 59162 – Cartography

GEOG 59230 – Remote Sensing

GEOG 60900 – Qualitative Methods

GEOG 69004 – Quantitative Methods

GEOG 69007 – Spatiotemporal Analytics

GEOG 69164 – Cartographic Design

Students who earned their bachelor's degree at Kent State and have taken the undergraduate equivalents of any methods courses listed can count these towards the above requirement. Note that these courses taken at the undergraduate level will not count towards the total degree course hour requirement; only that additional methods classes will not be required.

Other graduate-level methods courses, as approved by Advisor and Graduate Coordinator, may count towards this requirement.

Students are allowed to count no more than 3 credit hours of Research I (GEOG 60996/60998) towards their M.S. degree requirements.

All funded graduate students are required to attend all colloquia during their residence.

The Thesis

All M.S. students must complete a Master's Thesis as part of their requirements for graduation. A thesis should reflect the individual's ability to identify a problem, carry out the necessary research, apply appropriate analytical tools, and present the results of the research in a scholarly manner. An advisory committee shall be chaired by the advisor and at least two additional members selected by the student in consultation with the advisor. All Graduate Faculty are eligible to serve on Master's Committees; however, the thesis advisor must be level A2, A3, F3, or F4. At least one of these two members must be a member of the Department of Geography.

There are two main sequences of events related to the thesis: first, the development and approval of a thesis proposal, and second, the writing and defense of the thesis. Each of these sequences is shown below. It is strongly advised that the students and all committee

members, especially the advisor, maintain regular contact during these processes.

Procedure for Developing a Thesis Proposal

A thesis proposal that clearly and succinctly lays out the student's intentions for his/her thesis research is the basis of a successful thesis. Ideally, the proposal developed in Research and Presentation of Geographic Data can form the foundation for the thesis proposal. Students are strongly encouraged to defend their proposal before starting considerable work on the thesis itself. The Notification of Approved Thesis Topic form, to be completed at the end of this process, signals the approval of the proposed thesis work.

1. The student should work with his/her advisor to identify thesis committee members and meet with these members to ask whether they are willing to serve on the committee.
2. The student develops an acceptable thesis proposal with his/her advisor. Excluding references, the thesis proposal is typically between 4000 and 5000 words.
3. When the advisor gives approval, the student should submit copies of the proposal to the remainder of the thesis committee.
4. The committee members have one week to review the proposal. Committee members will provide feedback to the advisor regarding the suitability of the proposal for defense, and any requested changes.
5. Once all committee members have reviewed the proposal, the advisor will confer with the student concerning the reviews. If the proposal is acceptable, the student, in conjunction with his/her advisor, will arrange for a defense in which the M.S. proposal is formally approved. If changes are necessary, go back to Step 2.

6. A proposal defense begins with an oral presentation (generally between 10 and 15 minutes) of the thesis proposal. Following this presentation, an oral examination will proceed, consisting of questions from the entire committee. Once questioning is complete, the thesis committee will vote on the defense.
 - a. If the student passes the defense unconditionally, the student may proceed to Step 7.
 - b. If a student passes the defense but changes are requested in the proposal document, the student must work to meet the committee's concerns before proceeding to Step 7.
 - c. If a student fails the oral defense, s/he must go back to Step 2.
7. The advisor completes a Notification of Approved Thesis Topic form, which is sent to Graduate Studies for the official record.
8. The student must then register for GEOG 60199 (Thesis I) the next semester. Once the student has registered for Thesis I once, s/he must then remain continuously registered in Thesis II until the thesis is successfully defended and submitted. This includes summer sessions.

Defense of Thesis

The student and advisor will work closely during the process of the student's thesis research. Regular meetings should be scheduled, and the research should be reviewed at a frequency that is acceptable to both student and advisor. Students are encouraged to set up occasional thesis committee meetings to discuss progress with the full committee. The student must register for graduation (in Flashline) by the start of the semester in which s/he hopes to graduate.

1. When the student and advisor believe the thesis is ready for defense, it will be sent to the members of the committee for review.

2. The committee will have a period of 10 working days to read the thesis, unless a shorter period is agreed to beforehand. The advisor will convene the thesis committee (without the candidate) to evaluate it. The committee must unanimously agree that the thesis is ready for defense. Recommended revisions will be noted by the advisor and communicated to the candidate; the committee may:
 - a. accept the thesis document as is, and the student and advisor can schedule a defense;
 - b. require minor changes, in which case the student can move forward with the current document as the defense document and schedule a defense, while making the required changes;
 - c. require major revisions, in which case the modified thesis must be reevaluated by the committee before approval to move forward to defense is given; or
 - d. find the thesis work unacceptable for defense. If this happens, the student, advisor, and Graduate Coordinator will meet to discuss a route forward.
3. Once the student's committee has agreed to proceed to the thesis defense, the student and committee will identify an acceptable time and place. The defense should be scheduled at least 10 working days in advance unless the committee unanimously agrees otherwise. The Department Chair, Graduate Coordinator, and secretary should be notified of the time and date at this point.

The defense will be open to the University community. Notification of the time and place of the defense should be made public at least one week in advance of the defense. In the absence of the Thesis Advisor, the oral defense may not be held. If it is a matter of long-term absence or illness, the Chair and Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the Dean, should make appropriate arrangements for a substitute.

4. The defense begins with the thesis committee agreeing that the defense may proceed. This is to be determined at the beginning and without the candidate or others being present. If more than one member of the thesis committee finds the thesis unacceptable, the oral defense will be postponed until the thesis has been sufficiently modified that the thesis is acceptable, with only one dissenting vote allowed. If the thesis is not acceptable at this second scheduled defense, the Dean will be notified, and all further action is then the responsibility of the Dean.
5. The student will open the defense with a 15-20 minute presentation of his/her findings.
6. The members of the thesis committee will question the candidate. Typically, there are two or more rounds of questioning, with the first round consisting of ten minutes per committee member, the second round consisting of five minutes per committee member and additional rounds as needed until all questions by the committee have been addressed. Following questions by the examining committee, members of the audience are permitted to ask questions. Questioning should focus on the substantive nature of the research, rather than copy-editing issues, which should be written out and presented to the student after the defense. The questioning will continue until it has run its course.
7. Once questioning is completed, the advisor will adjourn the defense and the room will be cleared of everyone except for the committee. The committee will then evaluate the candidate on both the overall quality and significance of the thesis, as well as the oral defense. Each committee member will vote 'pass' or 'fail'; a candidate passes the defense if s/he received no more than one dissenting vote. If the candidate does not pass the

defense, a rescheduling of the defense will occur when, in the opinion of the committee and the student, the thesis has been modified appropriately. If a candidate does not pass the defense after a second attempt, the Dean will be notified, and all further action is then the responsibility of the Dean.

8. Following the successful defense of the thesis, any requested changes to the thesis document must be made by the student, and a final version of the thesis must be approved by the student's committee and advisor.
9. Once the committee has approved the thesis document, the document must then be submitted – as a pdf -- to the Department Chair for approval. The student must give the Department Chair at least three days to examine the thesis. After approval from the Department Chair, the student should then fill out the signature pages which will be provided by Mary Lou with instructions.

Recommended timeline for full-time M.S. Students

FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 1

Take GEOG 60800 (Geographic Thought) and two other graduate-level classes. Schedule regular meetings with temporary advisor and meet with other faculty with similar research interests.

SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 1

Take GEOG 69701 (Research and Presentation) and two other graduate-level classes. Identify a permanent advisor by Week 6, either by advisor form or with the annual report. Potential committee members should be identified by end of semester.

Consult with your advisor for turning your Research and Presentation proposal into a Thesis Proposal. If possible, defend your proposal at the end of spring semester and begin thesis work in the summer.

FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 2

You should have defended your thesis proposal before Fall semester begins. Register for Thesis I. Seek to meet remaining requirements by registering for one or two graduate-level classes.

SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 2

Continue work on thesis, with the goal to defend by the end of this semester.

SPRING AND SUMMER SEMESTER, YEAR 2 (IF NECESSARY)

Continue to register for Thesis II this and each subsequent, semester until the thesis is defended and submitted.

Combined Bachelors/Masters Degree (BA/MS)

Qualified undergraduate students in Geography and Environmental Studies are encouraged to apply for the combined BA/MS program at Kent State University. This will enable these majors to complete an M.S. in Geography in a shorter period of time.

To enroll in this program, students must first apply and be accepted to the M.S. program. Applications are processed through the Division of Graduate Studies. The requirements comprise:

1. Official copies of all post-secondary transcripts,
2. Three letters of recommendation,
3. A current résumé,
4. A statement of research interests (with recommended length of 1 to 2 pages),
5. **Optional** GRE score (official copy sent from ETS)

Strong preference will be given to applicants with a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher. Admission evaluation criteria also include significant geography coursework, an idea of research interests, and solid recommendation letters.

Students should make sure to apply the semester before they wish to begin taking graduate level classes.

Once accepted, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, students may identify up to 9 graduate level (50000-level or above) credit hours that the student can enroll in before graduating with his/her Bachelors degree. These 9 hours should be taken during the senior year and will count towards both the Bachelors and the Masters degrees.

Since 9 credits is a typical graduate semester load, timelines toward completion are shortened by one semester relative to the date of their full entry into the M.S. program (i.e. following graduation with a B.A. degree). A permanent advisor should be picked by the 6th week of the first semester following full entry into the M.S. program, and a thesis proposal should be defended by the 6th week of the second semester. Given this, most students should enroll in Research and Presentation (GEOG 69701) during the spring semester of their senior year.

Students who are in the BA/MS program will also be eligible to receive funding and tuition remission after they have graduated with a B.A. degree. This funding is not guaranteed however and is awarded in a competitive process with other prospective graduate students.

Doctoral Program

Program Requirements

The K.S.U. Graduate College requires a minimum of 60 credit hours for the Ph.D., of which at least 30 must be for work on the dissertation. Of the remaining 30 hours, the department requires the completion of a minimum of 24 credit hours in letter-graded (A-F) coursework numbered 6/7/80000.

In particular:

- At least 18 credit hours must consist of graded geography coursework of level 6/7/80000. Students can count 3 credits of Research I (GEOG 80996/80998) towards this requirement.
- A minimum of 6 credits of course work or equivalence in research at a graduate level must be taken in a cognate discipline. Generally, such work will be taken with the cognate member of the student's advisory committee.
- A student must complete all 30 hours of regular coursework before s/he can defend the dissertation proposal. Comprehensive exams and the proposal defense can occur while the student is finishing the last bit of coursework.
- All graduate students are required to attend all colloquia during their residence.
- Once a student reaches candidacy, it is expected that s/he will register for Dissertation I for two academic terms at 15 hours each, and Dissertation II thereafter, each semester, including summers, until all requirements for the degree have been met.

New students are strongly encouraged to take the following courses within the first year of their enrollment, if they have not already taken similar courses at the Masters level:

GEOG 69701- Research & Presentation of Geographic Data (3)
GEOG 70800- Seminar in the Development of Geographic
Thought (3)

Students can take a maximum of 4 credit hours of workshop courses for graduate credit. However, students must first receive approval for receiving graduate credit for appropriate *graduate level* workshops from their advisor and the Graduate Coordinator. Approval will be determined based on the applicability of the workshop toward the student's academic progress and the Graduate Faculty status of the workshop instructor.

Cognate discipline

A student's doctoral work is expected to reflect the current status of the discipline of Geography. Moreover, it is expected that s/he will integrate knowledge and techniques from a related field outside of geography. This field serves as the student's cognate.

As noted above, students will take at least 6 hours of classes in a cognate field; these hours should be relevant to the dissertation topic. A committee member from a cognate discipline is also on the student's dissertation committee. Ideally, the committee member will be from the same discipline as the student's cognate classes, but this is not always the case.

The Dissertation

Ph.D. students must complete a Dissertation as part of their requirements for graduation. A student's work on his/her dissertation is supported and evaluated by an advisory committee chaired by the student's advisor. The student must consult with the committee to design his/her course program, examinations, and dissertation research. The advisory committee will meet at least once a year to review the progress of each student.

There are two dissertation formats allowed.

1. The first is a conventional, book-length document that provides a full accounting of an original research project.
2. The second is an option to write three or more papers, related to a single overarching topic, and packaged with introductory and concluding material. These papers must be either a. single-authored or b. if co-authored must be the student's idea, written by the student, and the student must be listed as first author.

The choice of format is up to the student and the advisor, and will not affect the overall process of completing the Ph.D. While it is helpful to know the preferred format before the proposal defense, it is possible to decide during the period of candidacy.

Dissertation Committee and Progress

The advisory committee is chaired by the advisor and at least three additional members selected by the student in consultation with the advisor. Two of these members should be from Geography, and at least one member must be a member of a cognate discipline. All members of the committee should be able to serve on Ph.D. committees. Please see the Graduate Coordinator to determine a faculty member's eligibility.

There are three main sequences of events related to the dissertation. First, the student completes all relevant coursework (30 credits including 24 credits of graded coursework). Second, the student must reach candidacy (become “ABD”); this includes the development and approval of a dissertation proposal and passing of oral exams. Third, the student will write and defend the dissertation. The second and third step is shown below. It is strongly advised that the students and all committee members, especially the advisor, maintain regular contact during these processes.

Procedure for Reaching Candidacy

The foundation for a successful dissertation is developing a research proposal that clearly and succinctly lays out the student’s intentions for his/her doctoral research. Students will likely conduct some preliminary work on their dissertation before reaching candidacy but are advised to seek to defend their proposal before starting considerable work on the dissertation itself.

1. The student should work with his/her advisor to identify dissertation committee members and meet with these members to ask whether they are willing to serve on the committee. At the same time, s/he should have completed all required coursework.
2. The student develops an acceptable dissertation proposal with his/her advisor. Excluding references, the dissertation proposal is typically between 6000 and 8000 words.
3. When the advisor gives approval, the student should submit copies of the proposal to the remainder of the committee.
4. The committee members have one week to review the proposal. Committee members will provide feedback to the advisor regarding the suitability of the proposal for defense, and any requested changes.

5. Once all committee members have reviewed the proposal, the advisor will confer with the student concerning the reviews. If the proposal is acceptable, the student, in conjunction with his/her advisor, will arrange to move forward to his/her exams. If changes are necessary, go back to Step 2.
6. The student, in consultation with the committee, will set the dates for his/her written comprehensive exams. There are three examinations, one administered by each member of the committee within the Department. All written exams must be completed within five working days. The student should confer with committee members regarding the topics to be covered and the ground rules for each exam (e.g. open-book or closed-book), as each faculty member determines his/her rules.
7. The student will take the three exams. Within one week of completion, the advisory committee will evaluate the written examinations.
 - a. For successful candidates, the oral examination will be scheduled.
 - b. If a portion of the written examination is failed, the student must retake that component within one month of notification. The student must successfully pass all written examinations before proceeding to the oral examination.
 - c. If any component is failed twice, the student is terminated from the doctoral program.
8. The student, in consultation with the committee, will set the dates for his/her oral exams. Unless agreed to beforehand, the oral exam must be within two weeks of notification of the successful completion of all aspects of the written examination.
9. A proposal defense begins with an oral presentation (generally between 10 and 15 minutes) of the dissertation proposal.

Following this presentation, an oral examination will proceed, consisting of questions from the entire committee related to both the dissertation proposal and the written examinations. Once questioning is complete, the committee will vote on the defense. The student may pass unconditionally, pass with changes to be made to the proposal, or fail the oral defense.

- a. If the student passes the defense unconditionally, the student may proceed to Step 10.
 - b. If a student passes the defense but changes are requested in the proposal document, the student must work to meet the committee's concerns before proceeding to Step 10.
 - c. If the oral examination is failed, the student must retake the exam within one month of notification.
 - d. If the oral examination is failed for a second time, the student is terminated from the doctoral program.
10. The *Report of Candidacy* and the *Approval of Dissertation Topic* forms must be completed and filed with Graduate Studies following the successful candidacy examination. Once the dissertation topic has been approved, the candidate is cleared to register for Dissertation I.
11. The student must then register for GEOG 80199 (Dissertation I) for the next two semesters. Once the student has registered for Dissertation I twice, s/he must then remain continuously registered in Dissertation II until the dissertation is successfully defended and submitted.

Defense of Dissertation

The student and advisor will work closely during the process of the student's dissertation research. Regular meetings should be scheduled, and the research should be reviewed at a frequency that is acceptable to both student and advisor. Students are encouraged to set up occasional dissertation committee meetings to discuss progress with the full committee. The student must register for graduation (in Flashline) by the start of the semester in which s/he hopes to graduate.

The examining committee will consist of the dissertation committee plus a Graduate Faculty Representative who is appointed as the defense nears. The Graduate Faculty Representative may also serve as moderator. The advisor should put in a request for a Graduate Faculty Representative around two months before an anticipated defense date.

1. When the student and advisor believe the dissertation is ready for preliminary approval, it will be circulated among the members of the committee.
2. The committee will have a period of 10 working days to read the dissertation and will then convene the dissertation committee (without the candidate) for the purpose of evaluating it. The Graduate Faculty Representative must be notified of this meeting and invited to attend (and vote) on the readiness of the dissertation for final defense. The committee must unanimously agree that the dissertation is ready for defense. Recommended revisions will be noted by the advisor and communicated to the candidate; the committee may:
 - a. accept the dissertation document as is, and the student and advisor can schedule a defense;
 - b. require minor changes, in which case the student can move forward with the current document as the defense document

- and schedule a defense, while making the required changes;
- c. require major revisions, in which case the modified dissertation must be reevaluated by the committee before approval to move forward to defense is given; or
 - d. find the dissertation work unacceptable for defense. If this happens, the student, advisor, and Graduate Coordinator will meet to discuss a route forward.
3. When the dissertation committee has met and has agreed to proceed to the final examination, the student and committee will identify an acceptable time and place. The defense should be scheduled at least 10 working days in advance unless the committee unanimously agrees otherwise. The Chair, Graduate Coordinator, and secretary should be notified of the time and date at this point.
 4. The defense will be open to the University community. Notification of the time and place of the defense should be made public at least one week in advance of the defense. In the absence of the advisor, the oral defense may not be held. If it is a matter of long-term absence or illness, the Chair and Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the Dean, should make appropriate arrangements for a substitute.
 5. The defense begins with the thesis committee agreeing that the defense may proceed. This is to be determined at the beginning and without the candidate or others being present. If more than one member of the thesis committee finds the thesis unacceptable, the oral defense will be postponed until the thesis has been sufficiently modified that the thesis is acceptable, with only one dissenting vote allowed. If the thesis is not acceptable at this second scheduled defense, the Dean will be notified, and all further action is then the responsibility of the Dean.
 6. The student will open the defense with a 15-to-20-minute presentation of his/her findings.

7. The members of the thesis committee will question the candidate. Typically, there are two or more rounds of questioning, with the first round consisting of ten minutes per committee member, the second round consisting of five minutes per committee member and additional rounds as needed until all questions by the committee have been addressed. Following questions by the examining committee, members of the audience are permitted to ask questions. Questioning should focus on the substantive nature of the research, rather than copy-editing issues, which should be written out and presented to the student after the defense. The questioning will continue until it has run its course.
8. Once questioning is completed, the moderator will adjourn the defense and the room will be cleared of everyone except for the committee. The committee will then discuss the success or failure of the candidate, with the moderator presiding. The candidate should be evaluated both (a) upon the overall quality and significance of his/her dissertation, and (b) upon the oral defense of his/her findings. A candidate passes the final oral defense if s/he passes with no more than one dissenting vote. If the candidate does not pass the defense, a rescheduling of the defense will occur when, in the opinion of the committee and the student, the thesis has been modified appropriately. If a candidate does not pass the defense after a second attempt, the Dean will be notified, and all further action is then the responsibility of the Dean.
9. Following the successful defense of the dissertation, any requested changes to the dissertation document must be made by the student, and a final version of the dissertation must be approved by the student's committee and advisor.
10. Once the committee has approved the thesis document, it must be submitted – in pdf format – to the Department Chair for approval. The student must give the chairperson at least three days to

examine the thesis. After approval from the Chair, the student must also fill out the signature pages.

Recommended timeline for full-time Ph.D. Students

FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 1

Take three Ph.D. level courses; GEOG 70800 (Geographic Thought) is recommended if you have not taken this before. Consider cognate courses each semester as you will need two total courses (6 credits)

Schedule regular meetings with temporary advisor and meet with other faculty with similar research interests.

SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 1

Take three Ph.D. level courses; GEOG 69701 (Research and Presentation) is recommended.

Identify a permanent advisor by Week 6, either by advisor form or with the annual report.

Consult with your advisor for turning your Research and Presentation proposal into a Thesis Proposal.

FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS, YEAR 2

Take two additional courses as part of your full-time load. The remainder of a full-time load can be additional courses or research hours.

Continue to work with your advisor to develop your dissertation proposal and assemble your committee. Aim to defend your proposal either in late spring or early summer of year 2.

Prepare for Comprehensive Examinations

YEAR 3

Register for Dissertation I (two semesters in a row). Following this, register for Dissertation II. You should be taking no additional coursework, unless it helps your dissertation.

YEAR 4

Continue to register for Dissertation II each semester until the dissertation is defended and submitted. This includes summer sessions.

Financial Support

The Department encourages all students to seek out funding to support their enrollment in the graduate program. The department offers a limited number of assistantships at the master's and doctoral level, and additional research assistantships may be available from individual faculty members.

Applying for Assistantships

All newly admitted students, as well as all continuing students in good standing that are not on funding, will be considered for assistantships each academic year. No separate application is necessary, though continuing students will need to indicate their interest in being considered on their Annual Report. Assistantships are only awarded for terms beginning in Fall Semester.

Expectations

Students awarded graduate assistantships will receive a stipend of \$15,000 (M.S.) or \$17,000 (Ph.D.) on an annual 9-month (September to May) contract. Aside from the stipend, students will receive tuition remission for three courses (15 credit hours for those registered in Dissertation I or II), a waiver for most fees, and a partial credit for health insurance.

Each graduate assistant is required to perform a maximum service load of 20 hours per week. This Graduate Assistant (G.A.) service involves assisting in classroom instruction, grading of papers, and other activities beneficial to the student's training and to the department. Students on funding are also expected to assist in other departmental activities as needed, including proctoring of exams, and serving as a mentor for undergraduate students. Additional forms of assistantships,

including Research Assistantships (R.A.), may also be available. All students on full-time assistantships are required to be present in McGilvrey Hall for a minimum of 20 hours weekly.

Graduate students on assistantships must carry a minimum of 8 credit hours and a maximum of 16 hours of graduate course load. For more than 10 credit hours, students must seek permission from the Graduate Coordinator.

Outside Employment Prohibition

Students on assistantship should not be employed outside the department. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator if you have any questions about this policy.

Eligibility

A student is eligible for funding for up to 2 years in the M.S. program, and up to 4 years in the Ph.D. program, pending appropriate progress (see below). Students admitted conditionally are ineligible for funding consideration until they have met the conditional requirements.

An annual review will be held no later than the end of February by the Graduate Committee to assess the progress of all graduate students toward completion of their degree. Students who have received departmental funding, but whose progress or performance is judged to be unsatisfactory, may have their funding and/or enrollment terminated at the end of the academic year. Marginal performance may result in students being subsequently funded on a semester basis instead of an annual basis. Students will be notified of this decision before May 1.

An M.S. student on assistantship who has not been defended his/her proposal before the end of his/her first year in residence will receive a commitment of only one semester of funding for the second year. The

second semester of funding will be restored if s/he defends his/her proposal by Week 10 of the first semester of his/her second year. A Ph.D. student on assistantship who has not been admitted to candidacy before the end of his/her second year will receive a commitment of only one semester of funding for the third year. The second semester of funding will be restored if s/he is admitted to candidacy by Week 10 of the first semester of his/her third year.

Students that are admitted to the university but not initially provided funding may apply for funding in subsequent years; this will be indicated on the Annual Report. Those students will then be evaluated alongside new applicants, and if they are awarded funding, will be eligible up through their 2nd year in the M.S. program or 3rd year in the Ph.D. program.

Funding support for the 4th year of Ph.D. study

The Department of Geography believes that most full-time doctoral students should be able to finish their dissertations within 3 years of starting the program. However, considering the competitive nature of the job market today, we believe that providing support for a 4th year in residence is necessary to prepare students for academic or research careers. This 4th year of support allows time to complete the dissertation, disseminate the results through publication and presentation, and participate in professional development opportunities.

To be eligible for a 4th year of funding, a student must have achieved the following in their first 3 years in the Ph.D. program:

1. Reached ABD status by the start of their 3rd year in residence
2. Clear progress towards the completion of their dissertation, with a work plan to complete the dissertation by the end of the 4th year. Progress includes the completion of all primary data

collection, completion of most of the analysis, and submission of a manuscript if the dissertation is article-based.

3. Have submitted at least one proposal for dissertation or research support to one external (i.e. non-KSU) entity by the end of their 3rd year in residence (note: for the NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, this means by February of the 3rd year in residence)
4. Have presented their research at three or more conferences. At least two presentations should be at national or international meetings.
5. Have at least two peer-reviewed manuscripts published/accepted, including one as lead or sole author

Other evidence of substantial scholarly activity (e.g. receiving external funding) can be presented if any of the above criteria are not met.

Fellowships

The university offers several fellowships each year, for which Ph.D. students may be qualified, including the University Fellowship (aka 'Dissertation Fellowship') and the David B Smith Fellowship. Calls to qualified nominees will be made each spring.

Summer support

The Department offers limited summer support for graduate students to serve as instructors for any courses that are available. Calls for interested students will be made each spring. Research support may also be available from faculty with external funding. Students are also encouraged to explore other options at the University during the summer.

Departmental travel support

The Department of Geography encourages graduate students to participate in academic conferences and workshops as part of their professional development. To help facilitate this, the Department generally offers travel support to eligible students. This total may be used for one conference or split across multiple conferences. To be eligible, students must:

1. Actively participate in the conference by giving an oral presentation, a poster, or a panel (other forms of participation will be considered on a case- by-case basis);
2. Be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours during one semester of the academic year;
3. Be in good standing (not on departmental probation); and
4. Be within the first two years of an M.S. program or four years of a Ph.D. program.

We realize that conferences and travel are expensive, and that departmental support is unlikely to meet all costs. We thus encourage all students to also apply for additional funding, including at the university level, for GSS travel support.

Departmental research support

Some research projects incur costs that are otherwise prohibitive for students. To that end, the Geography Department sponsors four separate awards:

- Beck Fund supports general research costs for any project topic.
- Gandhi Fund supports research costs for projects on South Asia.
- Schmidlin Fund supports general research costs for any project topic.
- Norah Henry Fund supports research costs for female students with demonstrated financial need, with preference for students of Irish, German, Australian, Pacific Islander ancestries or first-generation American students and preference for international research.

Eligibility: All applicants must be enrolled in a M.S. or Ph.D. program in the Department of Geography and in good standing. Each Fund has additional eligibility requirements:

Review: Decisions will be made by the Graduate Committee. Awards will be determined based on the (1) scholarly merit of the project; (2) the quality of the written proposal; (3) the qualifications of the student to complete the work; and (4) award specific criteria (see award descriptions above).

These research funds are not generally awarded for conference travel, page costs, or permissions.

A call for proposals will be announced at regular intervals, once or twice a year. There will be instructions and an official application cover sheet.

Graduate studies travel and research support

Graduate Studies offers several awards for graduate students in support of research or other professional travel:

- [Domestic Travel Award](#): Travel, research, or professional development in the U.S., Canada, or Mexico. This reimbursement award is non-competitive and most popular with fall, spring, and summer application deadlines.
- [International Travel Award](#): Overseas travel, research, or professional development (non-Domestic). This reimbursement award is non- competitive and most popular with fall, spring, and summer application deadlines.
- [Research Travel Award](#): Used for thesis or dissertation research, graduate writing projects, and archival needs. This reimbursement award is competitive with a fall and spring application deadline.
- [Contingency Award](#): For special circumstances.

Work Study Application Requirements and Student Loans

All U.S. citizens being considered for a departmental graduate assistantship are required to process a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their eligibility for Federal Work-Study. Students must complete the FAFSA form and have the results of this form sent to the University.

All graduate students are encouraged to apply for needed financial assistance through the Student Financial Aid Office, 103 Michael Schwartz Center. Student loans and Federal Work-Study are available for all eligible graduate students.

Office Policies

To keep things running smoothly in the office, students should observe these policies.

- Before receiving departmental reimbursement for travel, you need to include GSS paperwork. Before applying to GSS, talk to Judy first.
- Key cards or keys cost \$20 if lost.
- Office hours are from 8-5. Please do not do any extensive copying after 4 since Mary Lou must wait until you are finished.
- In the office, you can use the Dell computer on the far side of the office (near the printer).
- There is absolutely no parking on R25. You can purchase permits for other lots, provided they are available. If not, you will need to make your own arrangements. If you park illegally, chances are you will be ticketed.
- Always check your mailbox in room 445. Also make sure to check your kent.edu email as this is the official email for all university business.

Maintaining Good Standing

Your responsibilities

The Department prides itself on its collegial atmosphere among faculty and students. While the advisor and Graduate Coordinator both supervise student's progress towards their degree, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to maintain proper registration, meet deadlines, and all other criteria laid out in this document as well as in the University Graduate Catalog.

Maintaining registration

All students on departmental support must be enrolled full-time. A full-time funded student must be enrolled for at least 8 hours per semester. S/he may not be enrolled in more than 16 hours without written permission. Students do not need to register for summer courses until they have already defended their thesis or dissertation proposal, after which they must enroll in Thesis or Dissertation hours during the summer. It is the student's responsibility to make sure s/he is properly registered.

All students must enroll for at least one term each calendar year to maintain their status as a degree-seeking student. A student that does not meet these criteria will be considered to have withdrawn from the university. If this happens, and a student would like to be reinstated, s/he must reapply for admission into the program through the same procedures as a new applicant. (Policy 3-01.13)

Coursework transfer

The Department will accept up to 12 hours of transferred coursework towards an M.S. degree, and 12 hours towards a Ph.D. degree. This credit must be earned at the relevant level at an accredited institution;

the student must have earned at least a B in the hours being transferred; and the work must be relevant to the student's degree. To transfer credit, students must provide a transcript of and syllabus for all coursework to be transferred and fill out a form provided by the Graduate Coordinator.

Time limit for completion

The M.S. program is designed to be a 2-year program and the Ph.D. is designed as a 3-4 year program, although it is recognized that it may require some students longer to complete, particularly if they are part-time. To ensure timely completion of degree, the department requires the completion of all M.S. degree requirements within four years from first enrollment. Ph.D. students must reach candidacy within four years of first enrollment and must complete the degree within six years total. Extensions may be granted via petition to the Graduate Coordinator, and must be approved by the Department, Graduate Committee, and the College. Students who have not completed their degree requirements within this time frame will be dismissed.

Funded students are expected to defend their M.S. proposal by Week 10 of their third semester or defend their Ph.D. proposal by Week 10 of their fifth semester. Extensions may be granted via petition to the Graduate Coordinator and must be approved by the Graduate Committee. Students who have not defended their proposal within this time frame will be ineligible for future funding.

Most students will need to pay some Thesis II or Dissertation II fees over the summers they are in residence and should plan on this in their budgeting.

Incomplete coursework

Students are discouraged from taking incomplete (IN) grades in any graduate coursework unless there are extenuating circumstances. A student must discuss their situation with the professor of the course in which they need an IN and reach an understanding of the timeline for completion of all work. The professor makes the request through flashline which must then be accepted by the student. Please note that for students on funding, all IN grades must be completed within one semester and incompletes will automatically revert to the default grade after a year. All IN grades must be rectified before graduation.

Annual report

All students are required to file an annual report by February 1st of each year, to keep the faculty informed of their progress towards their degree. Students that do not submit annual reports may lose funding in the subsequent academic year, be placed on probation, and/or be dismissed from the program.

The Graduate Committee will review annual reports, and by March 1st of each year, will classify the students into one of the following categories:

- Adequate Progress / No Action: The student is making adequate progress in the program.
- Warning: The student's performance and/or progress are falling below expectations.
- Recommendation for Dismissal: The student has not met requirements or made appropriate progress, and thus the Graduate Committee recommends dismissal from the program.

All students that receive a Warning assessment may be reviewed on a semester basis until they are no longer on Warning. The Graduate Committee reserves the right to re-review all cases as needed, should a

student's progress or standing in the program change.

Academic Dismissal

Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA average GPA in all graduate work at Kent State. Any student whose GPA falls below 3.0, or who receives a combination of more than 8 credit hours of B- or lower grades, or more than 4 credit hours of C or lower grades, is subject to dismissal. Procedures for dismissal and appeals can be found in the University Graduate Catalog.

Plagiarism and academic misconduct

Academic honesty is a value taken seriously by the Department of Geography and the University. Students are expected to adhere to standards set by the university. It is recognized that the boundaries of plagiarism and academic dishonesty may be difficult to discern in certain circumstances; the university has created a website to provide information on the definitions of and remedial methods for instances of academic dishonesty <https://www.kent.edu/plagiarism>.

The Institutional Review Board

Any research on people requires approval from the University's Institutional Review Board <https://www.kent.edu/research/office-research-compliance/research-human-subjects-irb>. This process involves the approval of the proposed work and the successful completion of online training modules. Human subjects work may not proceed until IRB approval is granted. This process may take up to 6 weeks during the school year, and longer during the summer. Procedures will vary depending upon the level of human subject research incorporated into a project.

Advisor and Committee

Selection of Advisor

Upon entry into the program, the Graduate Coordinator assigns one faculty member as a temporary advisor to each incoming student, based on mutual interest. This assignment by no means confers an obligation for the student to work with the faculty member as a permanent advisor. The temporary advisor will help the student design a program of courses for the first semester. The temporary advisor assignment is terminated when the student selects a permanent advisor. If no new advisor is selected, it is assumed that the temporary advisor is now the permanent advisor.

The selection of a permanent advisor must take place by Week 6 of the second semester in the program. Permanent advisors are indicated either through the Advisor Declaration Form or by the Advisor signature on the Annual Report. All academic decisions must be made following consultation with the student's advisor.

Students are expected to remain with their permanent advisor. Advisor changes are discouraged except for cause and only in the most exceptional cases. This decision must be made in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, the current advisor, and the prospective advisor.

Co-advising may be possible under certain circumstances. This should be considered when two faculty members equally cover the spectrum of thesis or dissertation research or when one faculty member does not have full grad faculty status.

Student-advisor relationship

A student's likelihood of success in his/her pursuit of a graduate degree is much higher in cases where a good working relationship with

their advisor is established. The student and advisor should jointly define a regular time for meetings. In these meetings, the advisor and student should lay out a timetable for the completion of all degree requirements, identify potential research areas, provide a prompt turnaround on all written work, and take an active role in professional mentoring of the student.

The student and his/her advisor each have specific expectations. A student should be open to suggestions and critiques from his/her advisor and make a good faith effort to see these through in a timely manner. An advisor should always keep the academic progress of the student uppermost in their considerations. Advisors should not assign additional work to a student that is not directly tied to the student's own research or a specific, paid project appointment. If a student has any concerns about expectations, they should consult first with the advisor, and then with the graduate coordinator if the issue is still unresolved.

On romantic and/or sexual relationships

Romantic and/or sexual relationships between graduate students and faculty present a conflict of interest if one person has a supervisory, teaching, evaluation, advising, or similar responsibility over another. Relationships of this nature may not continue without making alternative academic/supervisory arrangements.

If such a situation occurs, the faculty member has the responsibility to eliminate the conflict of interest. This person must notify the Departmental Chair of any romantic and/or sexual relationships that pose a conflict of interest and has a duty to cooperate in making acceptable alternative arrangements. The conflict of interest must be eliminated in a way which minimizes potential for harming the graduate student. This would constitute an exceptional case where an

advisor or committee change is warranted. Individuals who engage in such relationships (i.e., who do not notify their supervisors and do not make acceptable alternative arrangements) are in violation of this policy and may be subject to sanctions.

Selection of Committee

An examining committee is required for both the thesis and the dissertation. For the thesis, this committee consists of two faculty in addition to the advisor, at least one of whom must be in Geography. For the dissertation, this committee consists of three faculty in addition to the advisor, including one cognate member. Three of the four members of the dissertation committee must be full graduate faculty. While the student's advisor is the chair of the committee examining the student's work, all committee members should be kept informed of the student's progress at regular intervals. For both the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, it is possible to have a committee member from outside Kent State University. However, this must be cleared with the Graduate Coordinator who must fill out the necessary paperwork.

After approval of a thesis / dissertation topic, no changes may be made to the composition of the student's committee without approval by two-thirds of the Graduate Faculty. However, if a committee member leaves the department and/or the university, then a change can be made without any approvals.

Department Life

Dealing with your responsibilities

Life in a graduate program can be very different than an undergraduate program, as there are many more expectations that go beyond the traditional semester-to-semester plan. It is common for students to have difficulties balancing the diverse set of professional expectations within the graduate program; the inevitable personal issues that arise in life complicate things further. Successful time-management skills and self-discipline are keys to success in a graduate program. A student's advisor, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Chair are all available and willing to discuss a student's difficulties in managing day-to-day responsibilities while in the program.

Offices and Computers

All active graduate students are entitled to office space. These are assigned by the Graduate Coordinator. Most active Ph.D. students who are teaching a class or working on a research project will be assigned an enclosed office space with a door. Active M.S. students will be assigned cubicle space, likely in room 445. Office space is assigned on the basis of seniority. New office space becomes available every summer and students can move if they so desire provided there is an agreement with the graduate coordinator. Students who stay beyond the recommended timeline (2 years for M.S. and 4 years for Ph.D.) will lose their seniority and may have to move out of existing offices. However, we will endeavor to make sure each student continues to have some space available for their use.

The Geography Department does not provide computers for graduate students. There are two computer labs that are open when not being used for classes. Occasionally spare computers may become available, but this should not be an expectation. Offices and cubicles are secure

enough that students should feel comfortable leaving their personal computer in their workspace.

Grievances

Complaints regarding professional or academic matters, such as grading or workload, should first be discussed with the relevant faculty member. If a resolution is not reached, the issue should then be discussed with the Chair and/or Graduate Coordinator. If a solution cannot be reached within the Department, or if the issue involves the entire Department, the Dean should be consulted.

Departmental Communications

For the purposes of communications, students should regularly check their kent.edu email account. We also maintain a departmental listserv, and all continuing graduate students are required to maintain their membership on the listserv to be apprised of any needed information. Once a student has left the program, they will be removed from the listserv by the administrator.

Geography Graduate Student Association

The Geography Graduate Student Association (GGSA) acts as an intermediary between the faculty and graduate student body. In addition, promotion of the field of geography within the university and community is a pillar mission of the organization. Through activities, the GGSA fosters a sense of interdisciplinary community, collaborative research, and professional development. All graduate students in the Department of Geography are members of the Geography Graduate Student Association with all rights and privileges.

Graduate Student Senate

The Graduate Student Senate serves the needs of graduate students through University-wide representation and financially assists graduate student travel and research by offering specific awards to Kent State University graduate students across all academic disciplines. The springtime Graduate Research Symposium highlights academic achievements and scholarship of Kent State University graduate students. Monthly meetings are held to inform all graduate students of university policies and issues. More information is available at www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss.

Forms

Flashline

Students apply for Graduation (by the start of the semester in which they plan to graduate) within Flashline.

Graduate Studies Form Library

www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/forms-library

This webpage contains all the University-level forms relevant to the programs. Direct links are not provided since the URLs change often. Critical forms on this webpage are:

- **Application for Graduate Re-enrollment**
For students that have become inactive and are applying for reinstatement
- **Letter of Recommendation Form**
For students applying to the program that are having trouble with the recommendation form process in the system, this form can be used as a substitute.
- **Report of Candidacy and Approval of Dissertation Topic**
Submitted when a student passes his/her Ph.D. candidacy exams.
- **Notice of Matriculation**
For students in the Master's program who are applying to continue in the Ph.D. program.
- **Approval of Thesis Topic**
Submitted when a student passes his/her thesis proposal defense.
- **Application for Extension of Time Limits**
Submitted when a student has reached normal time limits for degree completion and other deadlines and is requesting an extension.
- **Recommendation for Appointment to the Graduate Faculty**
Submitted for non-KSU faculty that will be serving on a student's thesis or dissertation committee.

- **Request for Leave of Absence**

Submitted when a student needs to temporarily leave the program. Submission of this form 'stops the clock' towards time limits for the degree.

Department of Geography Forms

www.kent.edu/geography/forms

- **Declaration of Advisor Form**

Submitted when declaring or changing a permanent advisor

- **Annual Report**

Submitted every February 1st

Contacts and Resources

Department Chair: Scott Sheridan (ssherid1@kent.edu)

Graduate Coordinator: Dave Kaplan (dkaplan@kent.edu)

Administrative Assistant: Mary Lou Church (mchurch1@kent.edu)

Geography Graduate Student Association President: James Kaemmerer
(jkaemmer@kent.edu)

Department of Geography website: www.kent.edu/geography

Graduate Studies website: www.kent.edu/graduatestudies

University Registrar: www.kent.edu/registrar/

Office of Global Education: www.kent.edu/globaleducation

Graduate Student Senate: www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss