

GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDELINES (GSG)
DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY
Revised by the Graduate Committee: March, 2016

Section 1: Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources

1.1 University resources for graduate students

- UPRM Graduate school, or OEG (<http://grad.uprm.edu/>)
Information for current students (<http://grad.uprm.edu/oeg/ENGLISH/CurrentStudents/>)
The above site has Plan of Study info, UPRM thesis templates, and other helpful info
- UPRM Graduate Catalog (<http://www.uprm.edu/academics/catalog/>)
- UPRM Academic Calendar (<http://www.uprm.edu/academics/calendario/>)
- UPRM Certification 09-09 and ammendment 15-21 (Graduate Student Regulations, (<http://grad.uprm.edu/cert.pdf>))
- UPRM Certification 05-62 and ammendment 15-91 (Graduate Assistanships)

1.2 Department of Geology resources

- The Department of Geology Graduate Committee. This committee deals exclusively with graduate student issues. We develop policy, follow requests from the Director, mediate disputes, look out for you guys, and in general advocate for graduate students.
- Department of Geology Graduate Student Guidelines (this document).
- Dept. of Geology Graduate student website
- (<http://geology.uprm.edu/gradstudies/gradmain.html>)

Section 2: Research Timescale

- 2.1 For a full-time student with a BS in Geology, the target time for a MS degree in Geology will be from 2 years. Part-time students, students without a BS in Geology who and/or those that have deficiencies, and students who change projects and/or advisors will take longer than 2 years to earn their MS in Geology. Non-geology students in the MS program will typically have deficiencies to make up, which will add additional time/semesters.

See the end of this document for full suggested timelines.

Year 1: first semester

Identify a thesis advisor, research project, and talk to others and form your MS Thesis committee, and complete your **Plan of Study**. If you are planning on having a committee member from outside UPRM, there is a separate procedure that the Office of Graduate Studies requires you to complete (additional paperwork is required).

Please note: The most recent version of the Plan of Study document is from Sept. 2014 (make sure you have this version, and not an older one; check-there is a date on it).

If you have an assistantship (teaching or research), you should start completing your 21 hours of workshops, conferences, etc. (Ammendment 15-91, Cert. 05-62)

Year 1: second semester

Presentation of your MS research proposal to your thesis committee. MS students are **required** to (1) write a MS project proposal, and (2) give an oral presentation of their project to their MS committee. A lot of planning goes into this process..

- You are required to write your research proposal in English, and it should be written in conjunction with ongoing discussions about your project with your advisor.
- It is recommended that you exchange several drafts of your MS proposal with your advisor prior to providing a copy to your MS committee for review.
- Be sure to ask your committee members how far in advance of your presentation they would like to have a copy of your project proposal to read (less than one week is not acceptable in any circumstances).
- Talk with your committee several months before you plan to present your proposal- arrange a date that everyone can attend, and plan on a 2 hour meeting.
- Reserve a room for 2 hours and a projector with the dept. secretary in advance.

- If one of your committee members is remote (i.e., outside UPRM), then the student is responsible for making arrangements for a videoconference presentation.
- MS Proposal presentations are NOT public events (no audience allowed), but a student can ask for permission to have a public audience during the presentation part if they desire it. Permission must be given by all committee members to have the presentation be public. The post-presentation part cannot be public under any circumstances.
- A form signed by your committee called the “**Formulario para someter propuesta de disertacion, tesis or proyecto**” must be submitted, along with the signed cover page of your project proposal, to the Office of Graduate Studies after the successful completion of your MS presentation.
- If your MS committee does not approve your project proposal (i.e., you did not pass), then your committee will provide information to you about options that are available based on their evaluation.
- See Section 6 (below) about registering for GEOL 6999, Thesis. Registering for 3 credits of GEOL 6999 in your 2nd semester allows you to focus time on the writing of the proposal.

Year 2-3: MS Thesis defense

During year 2 or year 3, depending on when you finish your classes and thesis research, you will need to schedule a public presentation of your Master's Thesis.

- Like your proposal, this event needs to be coordinated with your entire MS thesis committee in advance. This includes acknowledgement from your main thesis advisor that you are ready to defend
- Your written Master's Thesis (in English) must be completed before defending
- You must select a date, and post public announcements (flyers, emails) at least one week in advance (this is **required**).
- If you have not defended your MS Thesis after 6 years, you will be suspended from the UPRM graduate program for a time period of 1 year. After 1 year has passed, you may petition the department for re-entry.

Section 3: Funding Sources

3.1 TA support

TA (Teaching Assistantship) is support awarded by the department; receiving a TA is a privilege, not a right. Tuition can be included. Fees are not included. Insurance is not included. All graduate students must have previously taken the equivalent class that they will TA and have permission of the professor. If the equivalent class has not been taken, but a similar class has been, evidence must be presented (i.e., a course syllabus) that the class previously taken covered at least 75% of the material in the class the student will TA. TA support can be offered for 4 semesters (2 yrs); 2 additional semesters (1 yr) can be applied for in “cases of merit,” but no more are allowable.

3.2 RA support

RA (Research Assistantship) is support from research funds. All other expenses are by arrangement with your advisor. This may or may not include support for tuition, fees, insurance (this is NOT guaranteed- you should ask your advisor).

3.3 No support

You are not required to have TA or RA support to be a graduate student in the Dept. of Geology. However, full-time students with no TA or RA support should have sufficient financial resources available to maintain satisfactory academic performance. There are many opportunities and organizations to apply to for external funding (NSF, NASA, GSA, AGI, Ford, industry, etc.). Ask your advisor about funding opportunities.

Section 4: TA Responsibilities

4.1 Credit hours vs. teaching hours

To receive full-time TA support you must be registered for 9 credits of classes or Thesis credits that count towards completion of your MS degree. A full-time TA represents 18 hours of work weekly. A full-time teaching load for a TA means teaching 6 credits of laboratories, 3 hours of office hours, and 9 hours of preparation. The laboratory work is generally either two 3 credit labs or three 2 credit labs. Other arrangements are possible.

4.2 Office hours.

You must schedule 3 hours of office hours weekly for students in your labs.

4.3 Other

TA assignments are made by the Director, usually in conjunction with the professor who is teaching the course. Most incoming MS students have no previous teaching experience, and we understand this- learning how to TA a lab is part of your MS education. We suggest that you work with and seek advice from the professor whose course you are teaching- every professor works with his/her TAs differently, so make sure you communicate with the professor. Remember, even your professor started out as a TA at some point.

Section 5: Required MS Coursework (also refer to the Graduate Catalog)

5.1 Total credits

32 approved credits are required to graduate with an MS degree in Geology, including:

- 3 to 6 credits of GEOL 6999 (Thesis Research)
- 2 credits of graduate seminar (GEOL 6505 & GEOL 6506)
- 3 credits of GEOL 6107 (Geology and Tectonics of the Caribbean)
- 6 credits of classes outside your field of specialization (can still be inside GEOL)
- 15 to 18 credits of GEOL classes

5.2 Restrictions

No more than 6 credits of 'Special Topics' courses will be approved.

No more than 9 credit hours of GEOL 5xxx level courses will be approved.

No 3xxx or 4xxx classes can count towards your 32 credit requirement.

Please note: 5000 level classes are for graduate and undergraduate enrollment. 6000 level classes are only for graduate students (undergraduate students can enroll in 6000 level classes with permission, but do not earn credit towards graduation).

5.3 Plan of Study

All classes you plan to take that will count towards your graduation must be listed in your Plan of Study. Selection of courses should be discussed with your advisor, and will need signature approval by your thesis committee, the Graduate coordinator, and the Director. Changes to your Plan of Study can be made relatively easily (a one-page amendment needs to be filed with OEG). All changes must be filed with OEG prior to the semester you plan to graduate.

5.4 Registration

Graduate students register for courses in the Department of Geology during normal registration periods. A full-time graduate student registration is 9 credits of regular classes, or a variable number of thesis credits (GEOL 6999). If you are receiving TA or RA support, you should be in contact with either your advisor or the Chairperson of the Dept. of Geology in advance of registration to confirm the extent of your support.

IMPORTANT: Please notify the Dept. of Geology if you are not going to register for courses for any reason (doing a semester internship, going on inactive status, etc.). This way we are aware of your status.

Section 6: MS Proposal and GEOL 6999 (Thesis) credits

6.1 MS Proposal

As stated in section 2.1 above, you must present your MS proposal by the end of your first year.

At the successful completion of your MS proposal presentation, the signed signature page of your MS proposal must be turned in to the Office of Graduate studies.

6.2 GEOL 6999 credits

You may register for GEOL 6999 (Thesis) for a maximum of only two semesters to complete and present your proposal. If you do not successfully present your MS proposal by the end of the second semester you are registered for GEOL 6999, you will not be able to register for GEOL 6999 again until after the successful completion of your MS proposal presentation and the signed signature page of your MS proposal has been turned in to the Office of Graduate studies.

Please note: The inability to register for GEOL 6999 due to not having completed your MS proposal is usually very inconvenient for graduate students, and may prevent you from being eligible for receiving financial support. **THIS IS A BIG DEAL; FINISH IT IN TWO SEMESTERS!**

6.3 Certification 09-09 (see link in Section 1)

Contains additional information regarding Thesis credits.

Section 7: Deficiencies

7.1 Entering graduate school

A maximum of four deficiency courses may be assigned. Deficiencies are determined at the time of admission to UPRM, and are at the discretion of the student's potential advisor and the Director. Potential students should discuss the course needs of the thesis project in advance of application/admission and potential deficiencies. If a student decides to change project and/or advisor, any new deficiencies that are identified are the responsibility of the student.

7.2 TA status

Graduate students will not be allowed to TA classes that they have a deficiency in.

7.3 Suspensions for D or F in deficiency courses.

Graduate students can receive a one (1) year suspension for receiving grades of D or F in deficiency courses, as outlined in Certification 09-09.

Section 8: Changing of MS thesis project and/or advisor

8.1 Change of thesis project

A change in thesis project must be approved by your current advisor, and the Graduate Committee must be informed in advance. Be aware that changing your project will require you to do a new MS research proposal presentation. Changing projects can also require a change in the MS thesis committee and also require additional coursework, thus requiring a change in your Plan of Study. Changing MS thesis projects will almost always add at least 1 year onto your MS degree, and sometimes much longer.

8.2 Change of thesis advisor

A change in thesis advisor must be approved by your present advisor, and the Graduate Committee must be informed in advance. If the thesis project remains the same, you may not be required to re-present your MS research proposal. If the project changes, all details in Section 8.1 apply.

Section 9: Departmental Keys

9.1 Entering graduate school

Graduate students will be issued a standard set of keys. The exact keys will be authorized by the Director, but typically include a 4th floor front door key (#8), and a graduate student office key (for either: F-204 or F-417). Other keys may be added as necessary (for teaching labs (#7), F-204, etc). All must be approved by the Director. Applications are filled out in the Dept. Front Office.

9.2 Exiting graduate school

Due to a long history of graduate students leaving UPRM without turning in their keys, a new policy has been implemented that will block your graduation and/or transcript requests until your keys are returned to planta fisica and the Department of Geology has official notification.

9.3 Responsibility of having keys

Graduate students with departmental keys have the responsibility that comes along with the keys. Under no circumstances can a graduate student give keys to anyone else to use to gain access to the Department of Geology. This represents a major security risk, and also an insurance liability, both for the graduate student and the person who possesses the keys, even if they have done nothing wrong.

Section 10: Graduate Student Offices

10.1 Office Assignment

All full-time graduate students enjoy the privilege of having an assigned office space. Currently graduate student offices are located in F-204 and F-417. Part-time students are not assigned office space. Office assignments are at the discretion of the Director, and can be changed at the Director's discretion. Comments or complaints about office space issues should be brought to the attention of your advisor. A mail box will be provided to you in the front office.

Section 11: Graduate Student Interviews

11.1 Annual interview

Roughly once each year, the Graduate Committee in the Department of Geology will conduct individual interviews with each graduate student for the purpose of the committee knowing your status. Interviews are usually scheduled for 15 minutes. During these interviews, your advisor will not be present, and the contents of the interview will be treated as confidential by the committee. This is your opportunity to provide feedback to the Graduate Committee about your graduate student experience in the Department of Geology at UPRM. We place a high value on your opinions, and encourage you to voice any concerns you may have, on any topic.

11.2 Exit interview

This interview provides the department with feedback from either successfully completed graduate students or graduate students that for any particular reason failed to complete the degree. This interview will be conducted shortly prior to leaving UPRM. Ideally, these interviews should be conducted in person; however, in the eventuality the student is no longer available, a written interview will be sent/emailed to the student to fill out and return.

11.3 Longitudinal interview

Of particular interest to the Graduate Committee is to obtain feedback at yearly intervals after your exit interview. We value all our prior students, and would like to stay in touch and keep track of your lives and careers, wherever they may lead you. Longitudinal interviews will typically be conducted by mail/email survey.

The contents of this document have been prepared and approved by the following persons:

K. Stephen Hughes, President
Graduate Committee
kenneth.hughes@upr.edu

Thomas R. Hudgins, member
Graduate Committee
thomas.hudgins@upr.edu

Fernando Gilbes, member
Graduate Committee
fernando.gilbes@upr.edu

Alberto M. López Venegas, College Rep.
Graduate Committee
alberto.lopez3@upr.edu

|

[Example of a Master's Thesis proposal cover page]

A Quantified Study of Sub-Cutaneous Life Forms

By:

Juanita J. Garcia

123-45-6789

Graduate Research Thesis Proposal
Submitted to the Department of Geology,
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of:

Masters in Science

University of Puerto Rico
Mayagüez Campus
2014

Approved by:

Mickey Mouse, Ph.D.
Graduate Committee, chair

Date

Minnie Mouse, Ph.D.
Graduate Committee, member

Date

Donald Duck, Ph.D.
Graduate Committee, member

Date

[Example of a Master's Thesis cover page]

A Quantified Study of Sub-Cutaneous Life Forms

By:

Juanita J. Garcia

123-45-6789

Master's Thesis
Submitted to the Department of Geology,
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of:

Masters in Science

University of Puerto Rico
Mayagüez Campus
2014

Approved by:

Mickey Mouse, Ph.D.
Graduate Committee, chair

Date

Minnie Mouse, Ph.D.
Graduate Committee, member

Date

Donald Duck, Ph.D.
Graduate Committee, member

Date

Sample Graduation Plan (with no deficiencies or initial transfer credits)				
University of Puerto Rico Geology MS Thesis				
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
Paperwork	Choose a committee	Submit and present proposal	Submit Graduation Request Form	Submit Amendment to Plan of Study (if necessary)
	21 hours of workshops (in first year awarded an assistantship--TA or RA)	21 hours of workshops (in first year awarded an assistantship--TA or RA)		
	Submit Plan of Study		If applicable, apply for PhD programs	Submit the Thesis Defense Request Form (at least one month before Defense)
Classes	GEOL major classes or Electives, Seminar 1	GEOL major classes or Electives, Seminar 2, Research Hours	GEOL major Classes, Research Hours	Final Geology Course(s)
Research	Develop a research plan, literature review, preliminary field work if possible	Field work/Initial work in or around Semester 2 and Summer	Field Work/Lab work and/or Data Analysis, Begin Writing	Data Analysis and Writing, Thesis Revisions, Defend Thesis, Submit Thesis, Graduate!
Sample Course Plan	6107*, G, E, S1	G, E, S2, R	G, G, R	G
Credits towards MS (must =32)	(10 credits)	(10 credits)	(9 credits)	(3 credits)
Credits enrolled	(10 credits)	(10 credits)	(9 credits)	(3 credits)

Sample Graduation Plan (with 3 deficiencies and no incoming credits)						
University of Puerto Rico Geology MS Thesis						
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4	Semester 5	
Paperwork	Choose a committee	21 hours of workshops (in first year awarded an assistantship--TA or RA)	Submit and present proposal	Submit Graduation Request Form	Submit Amendment to Plan of Study (if necessary)	
	21 hours of workshops (in first year awarded an assistantship--TA or RA)				If applicable, apply for PhD programs	Submit the Thesis Defense Request Form (at least one month before Defense)
	Submit Plan of Study					
Classes	Any deficiency course(s), GEOL major classes or Electives, Seminar 1	Any deficiency course(s), GEOL major class(es), and/or Electives, Seminar 2	GEOL major class(es), and/or Elective(s), Research Hours	GEOL major class(es) and/or Elective(s), Research Hours	Final Geology Course(s)	
Research	Develop a research plan, literature review, preliminary field work if possible	Initiate field work during Semester 2 / Summer	Field Work/Lab work and/or Data Analysis, Begin Writing	Data Analysis and Writing	Data Analysis and Writing, Thesis Revisions, Defend Thesis, Submit Thesis, Graduate!	
Sample Course Plan	D, D, 6107*, S1	D, G, G, S2	G, E, R	G,E, R	G	
Credits towards MS (must = 32)	(4 credits)	(7 Credits)	(9 credits)	(9 credits)	(3 credits)	
Credits enrolled	(10 credits)	(10 credits)	(9 credits)	(9 credits)	(3 credits)	
	<---Any deficiency courses must be completed with GPA of 3.0 or more in the first two years to avoid suspension.--->					
	<---Remember: certain classes (deficiencies and electives) may be offered in summers between semesters.--->					

D = Deficiency				
G = Geology Course (assuming all are 3 credits each; could be different) (must accumulate at least 15 hours)				
E = Elective Course outside your field of specialization (can still be in GEOL; must accumulate 6 hours)				
S1/S2 = Seminar 1 and 2 (1 credit each)				
R = Research Hours (3 credits each, must accumulate 6 hours)				
*6107 = GEOL 6107 (Geology and Tectonics of the Caribbean--should be taken whenever first available--3 credits)				
Transfer credits are those that may be applied from classes taken as an undergraduate.				
All Dates and Deadlines will appear on the university academic calendar (http://www.uprm.edu/cms/index.php/page/1430)				
These outlines are meant only as guides and should be used in order to formulate--with your advisor's guidance--your own unique plan of study.				