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# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Academic Policies and Procedures



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DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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## Introduction

The Geography Department at UWM provides a range of opportunities at the graduate level, which includes, the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree, the Master of Arts (MA) in Geography degree, the Master of Science (MS) in Geography degree, the Coordinated MA/MLS Degree Program in Geography and Library Science, the Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and an opportunity to obtain a micro-credential in GIS.

### *Role of Handbook*

This handbook serves as a guide to provide important information and resources to graduate students on how to navigate their graduate program in the Department of Geography at UWM. It aims to provide departmental level information rather than Graduate School level information which may be found elsewhere. The UWM Graduate School is responsible for granting the degrees, whereas the Geography Department administers the degrees under the authority of the Graduate School. This handbook is for all graduate students irrespective of whether they are pursuing a PhD, MS/MA, MA/MLS, graduate certificate or micro-credential at graduate level. It is designed to orient new graduate students, inform them about policies and procedures and serve as a reference to help students navigate their academic journey successfully.

### *Learning Outcomes*

**Master's level:** both the MA- and MS-geography are research-based degrees. Students completing these degrees are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of the program.

- Summarize, synthesize and evaluate pertinent literature to develop an understanding of theory, knowledge or practice in geography to facilitate independent research. Demonstrate the ability to develop a research proposal. The research proposal is assessed during GEOG 810/910 and the literature review is assessed in GEOG 870.
- Conduct guided research or scholarly work that addresses a problem or topic in the field of geography.
- Articulate ideas effectively, both orally and in writing, to professionals and the general public through conference presentations and thesis composition. Students are required to write a thesis and present (20 minute talk and 10 minutes for questions) their findings at the departmental colloquium.
- Cultivate ethical and professional conduct within the field of geography.

**Doctoral level:** Students are expected to have successfully completed a master's degree prior to entering the doctoral program. The PhD in geography is a research-based degree. Students completing these degrees are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of the program.

- Analyze, synthesize and evaluate pertinent literature to develop critical understandings of theory, knowledge or practice within a specialized field of geography.
- Develop specialized ideas, concepts, designs or methodologies to advance current knowledge in geography.
- Conduct independent research or scholarly work that makes a substantive contribution to the field of geography.
- Demonstrate advanced research skills and ability to conduct independent and original research, including the ability to formulate research questions, scrutinize literature, design research data collection protocols to address the questions and demonstrate ability to identify suitable analysis techniques.
- Gain sufficient knowledge to teach at university level.

- Demonstrate ability to produce academically rigorous written work and generate new knowledge. The dissertation and oral defense provide a means to assess a student's contribution to their field. Dissertations are expected to result in publishable work, such as, peer reviewed journal articles.
- Students are required to present their dissertation proposal (20 minute talk and 10 minutes for questions) and their final dissertation (45 minute talk and 150 minutes for questions) at the departmental colloquium.
- Cultivate ethical and professional conduct within the field of geography.

**Certificate level:** Students completing this certificate are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of the program.

- Cultivate ethical and professional conduct within the field of geography.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically and identify appropriate methods to address geospatial problems.
- Gain skills which will allow them to employ databases to manage geospatial data.
- Develop user interfaces or cartographic products appropriate for geospatial investigations.

**Microcredential level:** (This section is under development at present) Students completing this microcredential are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of the program.

### *Time to Degree and Graduate Program Tracker*

The typical **time to degree** is as follows:

For the MA and MS in Geography it typically takes 2 years to complete the program.

For a PhD, most students reach dissertator status in 2-4 years, followed by an additional 2-3 years for completion of research and writing.

For the GIS certificate....TBD?

For a microcredential.....TBD

The Geography Graduate Committee recently introduced the **Graduate Program Tracker**. The aim of the Tracker is to keep a continuous record of each student's progress throughout their graduate program. During a student's first semester the Graduate Chair will setup a OneNote notebook for each student which will be shared with the student, their advisor and the Chair. The notebook consists of a number of tabs which the student should complete each semester. The information contained in the Tracker includes, Student information, (name, advisor, year entered program, etc.), Semester checklist (each semester a student fills in details relating to their progress) and Coursework (a plan of study which is established at the start of the program and Actual Courses Taken which is a record of the student's program of study). The objective is to ensure that students stay on-track and to have a record of each course they completed to ensure compliance with program requirements. Other information contained in the Tracker includes, date of colloquium presentation, preliminary examination, etc.

### *Microcredential*

Microcredentials are a relatively new concept designed to help students meet academic goals and stand-out in a competitive job market. They typically comprise 6-12 credits that allow students to gain specific skills or knowledge in a focused area of study. They are shorter than certificates and degrees and often focus on practical or job-relevant skills. We are in the process of designing a 6-credit micro-credential in GIS.

On successful completion of the microcredential the student will receive a digital badge to use on their resume or social media, and it will also be identified on their transcript.

### *Graduate student orientation*

Prior to the start of classes, each fall semester, the Graduate Program Chair hosts a half-day orientation for incoming graduate students. Attendance at this orientation is compulsory for all new graduate students. The event starts with introductory remarks from the Department Chair and the Graduate Program Chair, followed by, introductions from all faculty, lecturers, postdoctoral fellows, and students.

The remainder of the orientation is taken up with topics related to getting settled in the department and program including defining roles and responsibilities of the program chair, program and coursework requirements, evaluations, funding and support, service requirements, etc. In addition, tips from experienced graduate students and a chance to meet the graduate student representative are provided. This is followed by lunch and a tour of the American Geographical Society Library.

Some useful resources to browse both prior to starting your graduate program include the Graduate School Graduate Assistant Handbook and the Geography Department Teaching Assistant Handbook.

### *A note on the use of AI in graduate school*

Prior

## Procedure for Reporting Grievances

If any student faces a situation in which they feel to have been treated unfairly by faculty, staff or another student, or have experienced or witnessed academic misconduct, discrimination or harassment, the following procedure should be followed. We suggest starting by discussing the issue with your advisor or another faculty member you feel comfortable with. If you are not comfortable speaking to faculty, consider discussing the issue with your graduate student representative. We would encourage you to write down the circumstances in as much detail as possible. The following is a general guide of who to contact:

1. Advisor or faculty member
2. Thesis or dissertation Committee members
3. Graduate Program Chair
4. Department Chair
5. Send a formal letter of complaint to the Graduate Advisor and Department Chair
6. Director of Student Services in the Graduate School

### *Grievances related to thesis or dissertation work, including related to your advisor*

The role of the Graduate Advisor is to provide academic guidance to the student, supervise the student's research, provide mentoring, monitor progress and assess the final product. The role of the graduate Committee is also to provide guidance in specific academic fields, support and advocate for the student and may play a role in resolving conflict or grievances between students and faculty to ensure fair treatment of students. In the event that a student feels there is a potential disagreement with the advisor regarding expectations, academic roles, progress towards their degree or some other issue, the student should first approach a Committee member. However, the Graduate Program Chair may also be consulted for assistance and guidance. If a student is uncomfortable speaking to Geography faculty they may contact the Graduate School for assistance.

### *Reporting harassment, bullying or discrimination*

The Geography department does not tolerate harassment, bullying or discrimination of any kind. If you experience or witness any form of acts and are uncomfortable reporting to Geography Faculty you may contact the UWM Office of Equity and Diversity Office for assistance.

## Advising

The advisor/advisee relationship is an important part of a successful and enjoyable experience at graduate school. Graduate students often indicate which advisor they would prefer to work with during the admissions process. The selection may be based on mutual research interests or direct contact with specific faculty members. But other times, if no preference is indicated, students may be assigned an advisor based on the information they provide in their application materials. However, a student may change their research focus or for some other reason realize that a different advisor would be preferable. In this case, they should feel free to discuss a switch with the current advisor and/or with the Graduate Committee Chair. Once the change has been made the student should notify the Graduate Committee Chair.

The graduate advisor should be a faculty member whose expertise closely matches the research interests of the student. Their primary role is to advise on courses and academic planning, supervise/guide the research project and help identify committee members. In addition, the advisor serves as the chair of the committee that will determine whether the student performs satisfactorily at each of the degree milestones.

The advisee should be familiar with the procedures and requirements of the University. Students should discuss their expectations and goals with their advisor.

### *Secondary Support Faculty*

#### **Background and rationale**

The Department of Geography has long had the tradition of admitting and funding graduate students only if a faculty member has committed to serving as their advisor. The reason for this is to make sure that we will be able to provide supervision for their theses, dissertations, or master's projects.

The purpose of the proposed policy is to expand on this tradition in two ways. First, this policy aims to ensure that all graduate students admitted to our program will have the support they need to meet program requirements, including the requirement to form a committee that includes at least one other faculty member in the department. Second, it aims to help new students build a broader base of support and advice within the department during the period in which they are taking classes and identifying prospective committee members for their dissertations, theses, or projects.

#### **Policy:**

1. The department will admit graduate students to master's or PhD programs only if they have one faculty member committed to serving as their advisor **and** at least one other faculty member committed to serving as "secondary support" during at least the student's first year of the program.
  - a. The **advisor** will commit to carrying out the responsibilities and meeting the expectations described in the department's annual advising agreement; this policy will not change the role of the advisor in any way.
  - b. The **secondary support** faculty will have an important but more limited role, agreeing to meet with the student at least twice during the first year of their program, in order to discuss their coursework, research, progress, and professional development. However, in order to serve in the secondary support role, the faculty member must also have signed the annual advising agreement.
  - c. The student will have the right to change advisor or secondary support faculty at any time and for any reason, following the procedures laid out in the department's graduate student handbook.
  - d. In cooperation with the advisor, the student may invite the secondary support faculty member to serve either as a co-advisor or as a committee member, but the student is not

obligated to do so. Secondary support faculty should be prepared to serve as a committee member for the student.

2. We will inform applicants to our graduate programs, both through the website and through communication from the graduate coordinator, that admission to the program requires a commitment from both an advisor and a secondary support faculty member. Faculty members communicating directly with prospective students should also let applicants know about the requirement and encourage them to contact other faculty members who might serve as secondary support.
3. During the admissions process, the Graduate Committee will have the responsibility of determining, for each student, whether there is at least one faculty member willing and able to serve as advisor and at least one faculty member willing and able to serve as secondary support. When we consider students for admission and rank them for funding, the Graduate Committee should include both the primary advisor and the secondary support as part of the information to consider.
4. The new approach will be implemented during the application period for admission in fall 2023. For students admitted during the 2022-2023 academic year or earlier, we will appoint secondary support during the academic year as needed.
  - a. For students who have already formed committees, a committee member from the department may be designated as their secondary support.
  - b. For students who have not yet formed committees, the graduate program chair will appoint a secondary support faculty member in consultation with the student.

### *Deadline for Adding/Dropping Courses*

As of Fall 2024 the university moved the deadline to add/drop courses to the beginning of Week 2 (it was previously Week 3). Students cannot make their own enrollment changes in PAWS after this date.

The Graduate School will still honor its tradition of allowing a one week grace period where they will process adds or other enrollment changes with a [Registration Change Form](#). The grace period deadline is until the Monday of Week 3. After which, all late adds require a [Request for Exception form](#) AND a Registration Change form. NOTE: the SWAP option on the Registration Change Form is used to swap one course for another and guarantees no change in tuition or fees, as long as the credits are the same. If a student adds one course and drops another, they may still owe for the dropped course depending on when it happens.

Furthermore the Grad School never requires a Request for Exception for the following circumstances, only a Registration Change Form:

1. Student needs to correct the number of credits enrolled in a variable credit course
2. Student needs to swap sections of a course with multiple sections
3. Student needs to swap cross-listed/jointly-offered courses

Students considering dropping any courses should first consult the [Interactive Add/Drop Calendar](#).

## Masters Degree Requirements

The Department of Geography offers a number of masters options, including Master of Arts (MA) in Geography, Master of Science (MS) in Geography and a coordinated Master of Arts in Geography combined with Master of Library and Information Science (MA/MLS). The MA is normally awarded to students whose work focuses on social science whereas the MS is awarded to those who focus on physical geography/natural science. A minimum of 6 credits in physical geography of natural science courses are required for the MS. Students must elect to pursue either the MA or MS option during their first semester in the program. Students may also elect to complete their degree through a thesis or non-thesis option.

### *Master of Arts (MA) in Geography Requirements*

Minimum degree requirement is 30 graduate credits with an average GPA of 3.0. The student, in consultation with the advisor, plans a program of study to include:

Course number	Course title	Credits
<b>GEOG726</b>	Geographic Information Science	4
<b>GEOG747</b>	Spatial Analysis	4
<b>GEOG810</b>	Introduction to Techniques of Research and Presentation	3
<b>GEOG870</b>	Contemporary Geographic Approaches	3
12 credits in graduate-level (700 and above) courses approved by the students advisor (at least 3 of these must be in one Geography-related graduate seminar course)		12
4 credits in the students capstone project (see Thesis Option and Non-Thesis Option below)		4
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

Students must also attend Geography colloquia regularly and present their thesis research at one of the sessions.

Master's students are required to be enrolled in 6 credits to receive tuition remission. However, if they do not need 6 credits to complete their degree requirements, they can submit a [Request for Exception](#) form to the Graduate School for a reduced GA credit load, for example for 3 credits. This allows them to keep their GA and receive tuition remission. This is typically only permitted during the graduation semester, but may also be approved for their last year depending on the requirements of your program.

### ***Major Professor and Advisory Committee***

The student must have a major professor to advise and supervise the student's studies as specified in Graduate School regulations. The Chair of the Geography Graduate Committee is a temporary advisor; within the first semester the student selects a major professor (advisor) in the student's specialization.

By the time of the student's thesis defense, the advisory committee must have at least three members, including the student's chosen major professor. The majority of the committee members must be UWM Geography graduate faculty.

### ***Thesis option***

Students must register at least 4 credits in GEOG 890 Research and Master's Thesis (approved by the student's advisor). In addition, the student, through the advisor, must present a proposed thesis topic and Advisory Committee to the Graduate Faculty of the Department for its approval.

The student must then write a thesis acceptable to the major professor for presentation to the Advisory Committee (two faculty members in addition to the advisor). The defense date for the thesis must be set at least two weeks prior to the Graduate School deadline for completion of all work. The thesis must be approved by the advisor and delivered to the committee at least six weeks prior to the defense date. Students must submit the thesis to the advisor in sufficient time to meet the committee deadline. Exceptions to these deadlines under unusual circumstances must be approved unanimously by the student's committee. In addition to submission of the final thesis to the Graduate School (according to their required procedure), the candidate must present the Geography Department with a professionally hard-bound copy that meets Graduate School specifications for quality. This copy will remain on file in the department.

### ***Non-Thesis option***

This option is intended for students who are not interested in continuing their graduate education beyond the master's degree, and plan to seek professional employment. The MA degree will normally be awarded upon completion of this option. The student must complete at least 4 credits of graduate work (approved by the student's advisor) as either:

- Two research papers (GEOG999) Students pursuing the non-thesis option through the two-research paper option must choose two separate topics, and conduct extended literature reviews on the topics, although other possibilities, such as a small research project, should not be excluded. The papers are expected to be 25-50 pages each. The student is expected to have an oral defense with three committee members regarding the two papers. According to current guidelines, the student is not expected to present their papers to the colloquium series.

OR

- A graduate internship (GEOG798 or GEOG889 (note GEOG810 is a prerequisite for GEOG889)). Students pursuing the non-thesis option through the graduate internship should conduct at least 180 hours of internship. The internship should be related to the student's academic area of interest and must be approved by the advisor. The student is expected to write a scholarly paper of 25-50 pages in length that connects the internship to the appropriate literature. The student must have a committee of three faculty members and is expected to go through an oral defense with the committee members regarding the internship paper. According to current guidelines, the student is not expected to present their internship paper to the colloquium series.

### ***Time limit***

This program is designed to be completed in two years of full-time attendance. The Graduate School requires that all degree requirements be completed within five years of initial enrollment.

## Master of Science (MS) in Geography Requirements

MS students may choose the Standard or the GIS Professional track.

### Standard Track

Minimum degree requirement is 30 graduate credits with an average GPA of 3.0. The student, in consultation with the advisor, plans a program of study to include:

Course number	Course title	Credits
<b>GEOG726</b>	Geographic Information Science	4
<b>GEOG747</b>	Spatial Analysis	4
<b>GEOG810</b>	Introduction to Techniques of Research and Presentation	3
<b>GEOG870</b>	Contemporary Geographic Approaches	3
12 credits in graduate-level (700 and above) courses approved by the students advisor (at least 3 of these must be in one Geography-related graduate seminar course)		12
4 credits in the students capstone project (see Thesis Option and Non-Thesis Option below)		4
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

Students must also attend Geography colloquia regularly and present their thesis research at one of the sessions.

### Major Professor and Advisory Committee

The student must have a major professor to advise and supervise the student's studies as specified in Graduate School regulations. The Chair of the Geography Graduate Committee is a temporary advisor; within the first semester the student selects a major professor (advisor) in the student's specialization.

By the time of the student's thesis defense, the advisory committee must have at least three members, including the student's chosen major professor. The majority of the committee members must be UWM Geography graduate faculty.

### Thesis option

Students must register at least 4 credits in GEOG 890 Research and Master's Thesis (approved by the student's advisor). In addition, the student, through the advisor, must present a proposed thesis topic and Advisory Committee to the Graduate Faculty of the Department for its approval. For students electing the MS option the faculty will also judge the appropriateness of the thesis topic for that degree.

The student must then write a thesis acceptable to the major professor for presentation to the Advisory Committee (two faculty members in addition to the advisor). The defense date for the thesis must be set at least two weeks prior to the Graduate School deadline for completion of all work. The thesis must be approved by the advisor and delivered to the committee at least six weeks prior to the defense date. Students must submit the thesis to the advisor in sufficient time to meet the committee deadline. Exceptions to these deadlines under unusual circumstances must be approved unanimously by the student's committee. In addition to submission of the final thesis to the Graduate School (according to their required procedure), the candidate must present the Geography Department with a professionally hard-bound copy that meets Graduate School specifications for quality. This copy will remain on file in the department.

**Non-Thesis option**

This option is intended for students who are not interested in continuing their graduate education beyond the master's degree, and plan to seek professional employment. The MA degree will normally be awarded upon completion of this option. However, to receive the MS degree students must formally petition the Graduate Faculty in writing, providing a rationale as to why that degree is appropriate to their program. The student must complete at least 4 credits of graduate work (approved by the student's advisor) as either:

- Two research papers (GEOG999) Students pursuing the non-thesis option through the two-research paper option must choose two separate topics, and conduct extended literature reviews on the topics, although other possibilities, such as a small research project, should not be excluded. The papers are expected to be 25-50 pages each. The student is expected to have an oral defense with three committee members regarding the two papers. According to current guidelines, the student is not expected to present their papers to the colloquium series.

OR

- A graduate internship (GEOG798 or GEOG889 (note GEOG810 is a prerequisite for GEOG889)). Students pursuing the non-thesis option through the graduate internship should conduct at least 180 hours of internship. The internship should be related to the student's academic area of interest and must be approved by the advisor. The student is expected to write a scholarly paper of 25-50 pages in length that connects the internship to the appropriate literature. The student must have a committee of three faculty members and is expected to go through an oral defense with the committee members regarding the internship paper. According to current guidelines, the student is not expected to present their internship paper to the colloquium series.

**Time limit**

This program is designed to be completed in two years of full-time attendance. The Graduate School requires that all degree requirements be completed within five years of initial enrollment.

*GIS professional track*

This track is intended for students who plan to seek professional employment in the field of GIS and are not interested in continuing their graduate education beyond the master's degree. Only MS degrees are offered in the GIS professional track.

Minimum degree requirement is 30 graduate credits with an average GPA of 3.0. The student, in consultation with the advisor, plans a program of study to include:

Course number	Course title	Credits
<b>GEOG726</b>	Geographic Information Science	4
<b>GEOG747</b>	Spatial Analysis	4
<b>GEOG704</b>	Remote Sensing: Environment and Land Use Analysis	4
<b>GEOG826</b>	Intermediate Geographic Information Science	4
<b>GEOG705</b>	Cartography	4
<b>Electives</b>		6

<b>GEOG798</b>	GIS/Cartography Internship (capstone project)	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

Students must also attend Geography colloquia regularly but do not need to present their thesis research at one of the sessions.

**Elective Courses – Select two**

<b>Course number</b>	<b>Course title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>GEOG804</b>	Advanced Remote Sensing	3
<b>GEOG737</b>	Quantitative Research	3
<b>URBPLAN791</b>	Introduction to Urban Geographic Information Systems for Planning	3
<b>URBPLAN792</b>	Using Urban Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Planning	3
<b>URBPLAN793</b>	Applied Projects in Urban Geographic Information Systems	3
<b>URBPLAN794</b>	Internet Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	3
<b>GEOG716</b>	Watershed Analysis and Modeling	3
<b>BUSADM749</b>	Data and Information Management	3

*Additional Requirements*

**Standard Track - Comprehensive Examination**

In combination with the thesis defense (or after completion of the work for the non-thesis option), the student must pass a final oral examination in the field of geography, administered by the student's Advisory Committee. Scheduling this examination during the summer is not permitted except under unusual academic circumstances and with the approval of the department faculty.

**GIS Professional Track - Capstone Project (GEOG789)**

Students pursuing the GIS professional track should conduct at least 180 hours of internship. The internship should be related to the field of GIS and must be approved by the advisor. The student is expected to write a scholarly paper of 25-50 pages in length that connects the internship to the appropriate literature. The student must have a committee of three faculty members and is expected to go through an oral defense with the committee members regarding the internship paper. According to current guidelines, the student is not expected to present their internship paper at the colloquium series.

## Master of Arts/Library and Information Science, MLIS

In collaboration with several other academic units at UW-Milwaukee, the School of Information Studies (SOIS) offers students the opportunity to obtain two Master's degrees concurrently—one in Library and Information Science (MLIS) and one in another subject area.

### Degree requirements

- The number of degree credits needed for each of the coordinated programs is usually 12 fewer than the sum of the two programs if they were not taken simultaneously. *All degree requirements of each component must be satisfied.*
- The MLIS portion of the coordinated degrees can be completed online.
- Prerequisite to the award of either degree in this program is the simultaneous award of its counterpart degree.

### MLIS component

The Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) component of each of the coordinated programs includes 30 credits of SOIS courses. These include the MLIS core courses (12 credits). The remaining 18 MLIS credits are selected from the School's offerings in accordance with the student's goals in the coordinated degree program.

### MLIS/MA Geography

The MLIS/MA Geography Coordinated Degree Program prepares students for positions as map librarians. Graduates of the program are qualified to assume positions as curators and staff in map collections of universities, governmental agencies, and industry.

The MA in Geography normally has a minimum requirement of 30 credits from regular geography courses (which includes 4 capstone/thesis credits). For the coordinated MA Geography/MLIS degree program, however, students can substitute 6 credits in information studies courses for 6 credits of geography. This program, therefore, requires a total of 54 credits. Students must complete the 30 credits required for the MLIS component and the 24 credits in Geography courses specified below.

Course number	Course title	Credits
<b>GEOG726</b>	Geographic Information Science	4
<b>GEOG747</b>	Spatial Analysis	4
<b>GEOG810</b>	Introduction to Techniques of Research and Presentation	3
<b>GEOG870</b>	Contemporary Geographic Approaches	3
<b>Select a GEOG 900-level course</b>		3
<b>Select any GEOG graduate course</b>		3
<b>GEOG889</b>	Internship in Geography	3
<b>or GEOG999</b>	Independent work	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>

The Geography Department offers opportunities for fieldwork that may count toward these requirements. In addition to off-campus fieldwork, the American Geographical Society Collection at the UWM Golda Meir Library provides many unique opportunities for map librarianship fieldwork and is an appropriate site for an internship.

Graduates of the program are qualified to assume positions as curators and staff members in map collections of universities, governmental agencies, and industry. In cases where map collections are not of sufficient size to warrant separation as distinct collections, knowledge of how to store, classify, and retrieve maps will be a valuable set of skills that enhance the qualifications of the information professional.

**Basic required MLIS courses**

<b>Course number</b>	<b>Course title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Core courses (12 credits)</b>		
<b>INFOST501</b>	Foundations of Library and Information Science	3
<b>INFOST511</b>	Organization of Information	3
<b>INFOST571</b>	Information Access and Retrieval	3
<b>INFOST579</b>	Research Methods in Information Studies	3
<b>Other MLIS courses</b>		18
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

Students must refer to the catalog pages of both individual master's programs to ensure that you meet all requirements for both degrees.

## Geographic Information Systems, Graduate Certificate Requirements

The Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is designed for those individuals seeking careers as a GIS specialist, providing geographic data management, spatial analysis, and GIS system management support to professionals in a broad range of disciplines, such as criminal justice, health services, city and regional planning, civil and environmental engineering, transportation, and marketing.

The School of Architecture and Urban Planning in the College of the Arts & Architecture and the College of Letters and Science jointly offer the certificate. The core courses (12 credits) focus on the structure of geographic data, components for managing geographic information systems, spatial analysis, and delivery of geographic information through maps and displays. Students select the remaining 6 credits for the certificate from electives, which may include an internship, in areas such as remote sensing, map-making, and data management systems.

Upon completion of the certificate courses, a student is awarded the certificate which qualifies for 5 credential points in the GIS Certification Institute's standards for professional certification in GIS.

A minimum of 6 credits in Urban Planning and 6 credits in Geography courses are required for completion of the certificate. To earn the Certificate, one must complete six semester-long courses (with a minimum of 18 credits), satisfy graduate school criteria for successful completion and maintain at least a B (3.00) average in all courses. No more than 3 credits of Internship or Independent Study will be counted towards the Certificate. The program requirements are as follows:

Course number	Course title	Credits
<b>12 credits required</b>		
<i>Tier 1 (select one course)</i>		
<b>GEOG726</b>	Geographic Information Science	4
<b>URBPLAN791</b>	Introduction to Urban Geographic Information Systems for Planning	3
<i>Tier 2 (select one course)</i>		
<b>GEOG826</b>	Intermediate Geographic Information Science	4
<b>URBPLAN792</b>	Using Urban Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Planning	3
<i>Tier 3 (select two course)</i>		
<b>GEOG704</b>	Remote Sensing: Environment and Land Use Analysis	4
<b>GEOG705</b>	Cartography	4
<b>URBPLAN793</b>	Applied Projects in Urban Geographic Information Systems	3
<b>URBPLAN794</b>	Internet Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	3
<b>BUSADM749</b>	Data and Information Management	3
<b>Electives – 6 credits required from the list below</b>		

<b>GEOG716</b>	Watershed Analysis and Modeling	3
<b>GEOG747</b>	Spatial Analysis	3
<b>GEOG798</b>	GIS/Cartography Internship	3
<b>GEOG804</b>	Advanced Remote Sensing	3
<b>GEOG904</b>	Remote Sensing and Urban Analysis	3
<b>GEOG999</b>	Independent Work (with appropriate topic)	3
<b>URBPLAN692</b>	Special Topics in Urban Planning:	3
<b>URBPLAN791</b>	Introduction to Urban Geographic Information Systems for Planning	3
<b>URBPLAN792</b>	Using Urban Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Planning	3
<b>URBPLAN793</b>	Applied Projects in Urban Geographic Information Systems	3
<b>URBPLAN794</b>	Internet Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	3
<b>URBPLAN991</b>	Legislative/Administrative Agency Internship	3
<b>URBPLAN999</b>	Independent Study	3
<b>ANTHRO380</b>	Anthropological Applications of GIS	3
<b>ANTHRO562</b>	Techniques and Problems in Archaeology	3
<b>ANTHRO768</b>	Topics in Advanced Research Design in Anthropology	3
<b>BUSADM749</b>	Data and Information Management	3
<b>CRMJST520</b>	Analysis Oriented Technology: Spatial Data Analysis; Crime Mapping; ArcGIS	3
<b>INFOST456</b>	Legal Aspects of Information Products and Services	3
<b>INFOST691</b>	Special Topics in Information Science:	3
<b>INFOST714</b>	Metadata	3
<b>Other courses as approved by the GIS Certificate Subcommittee</b>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>18</b>

Tier 1, 2, or 3 courses may count as electives once the Tier requirements have been satisfied.

## *Additional Requirements*

### ***Transfer credit***

No more than 20% of the required credits may be taken at an institution other than UWM. To be eligible for transfer, the course must have been completed within the last two years. These courses are subject to Graduate School transfer policy and must be approved by the director of the certificate program.

### ***Grade Point Average Requirement***

A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 in certificate courses taken at UWM is required.

### ***Articulation with Degree Program***

1. Credits and courses required for a certificate may double count toward meeting UWM graduate degree requirements subject to the following restrictions:
  - a. Degree programs must approve the courses from certificates that can double count toward the degree.
  - b. All credits taken in completion of certificate requirements may count towards a UWM graduate degree as long as they do not contribute more than 90% of the total credits needed to obtain the degree. (Note: Students in PhD programs must still complete the minimum residency requirements)
  - c. Certificate courses used toward meeting degree requirements must be completed within the time limit for transfer credit.
2. Courses completed for a degree may be counted toward a subsequent certificate, subject to all certificate policy requirements.
3. A course may count toward no more than one certificate and one degree.
4. Students may not earn a certificate subsequent to a concentration in the same area.

### ***Time limit***

Certificate program time limits are as follows:

- 18 or fewer credits/Three years from initial enrollment in the certificate sequence
- 19 or more credits/Four years from initial enrollment in the certificate sequence

For certificates that are designed as add-ons to degree programs and are awarded concurrent with the degree, the time limit shall be the same as that of the degree program.

## *Doctoral Degree Requirements*

The Department of Geography offers a tailored PhD program across a range of disciplines including human geography, physical geography and Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing. This degree can only be completed through a research track.

Minimum degree requirement is 54 graduate credits beyond the bachelor's degree, at least 27 of which must be earned in residence at UWM with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Under the guidance of the advisory committee, the chair of which serves as the student's major professor, the student plans a program of study leading to the development

of a special interest. All programs of study contain the following four elements: core concepts and methods, thematic focus, elective courses (as needed to meet the total credit requirement), and dissertation.

**Core concepts and methods**

Course number	Course title	Credits
<b>GEOG726</b>	Geographic Information Science	4
<b>GEOG870</b>	Contemporary Geographic Approaches	3
Select any Geography-related graduate seminar as approved by graduate advisor		3
Select one of the following:		3-4
<b>GEOG704</b>	Remote Sensing: Environmental and Land Use Analysis	4
<b>GEOG734</b>	Qualitative Research	3
<b>GEOG747</b>	Spatial Analysis	4
<b>Thematic focus</b>		
Select three courses		9-12
<b>Electives</b>		
Select courses, with approval of advisor, taken from geography or cognate fields to achieve the total of 54 credits required for the PhD degree		28-32
<b>Total</b>		<b>50-58</b>

**Thematic focus**

Students, in consultation with their advisor, must select a minimum of three courses that together confer specialized expert knowledge in one thematic area. The courses selected do not have to come from a single list, and may include other courses not listed.

**Local places: problems and issues**

Relevant courses include:

Course number	Course title	Credits
<b>GEOG441</b>	Geography of Cities and Metropolitan Areas	3
<b>GEOG464</b>	Environmental Problems	3
<b>GEOG564</b>	Urban Environmental Change and Social Justice	3
<b>GEOG945</b>	The Internal Structure of the City	3

<b>URBSTD981</b>	Argument in Urban Studies Scholarship	3
<b>URBPLAN720</b>	Urban Development Theory and Planning	3

***Global and regional perspectives***

Relevant courses include:

<b>Course number</b>	<b>Course title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>GEOG443</b>	Cities of the World: Comparative Urban Geography	3
<b>GEOG540</b>	Globalization and the City	3

***Monitoring and modeling urban dynamics***

Relevant courses include:

<b>Course number</b>	<b>Course title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>GEOG704</b>	Remote Sensing: Environmental and Land Use Analysis	4
<b>GEOG520</b>	Physical Geography of the City	3
<b>GEOG747</b>	Spatial Analysis	4
<b>GEOG826</b>	Intermediate Geographic Information Science	4
<b>GEOG650</b>	Geography Field Work	3
<b>GEOG804</b>	Advanced Remote Sensing	3
<b>GEOG737</b>	Qualitative Research	3
<b>GEOSCI730</b>	Modelling Techniques for Hydrogeology	3
<b>URBPLAN721</b>	Applied Planning Methods	3

***Research techniques***

Students who have not taken a research techniques course in their prior graduate program should consult with their faculty advisor regarding their enrollment in GEOG910, an introduction to theoretical and practical aspects of geographic research, funding, presentation, and publication. Ideally, students should enroll in this course after their first full year of courses, but no later than their fourth semester, after they have completed the majority of core requirements. The course is designed to assist students with the initiation of their PhD dissertation research.

## *Additional Requirements*

### ***Major advisor and committee***

Students must have a major professor to advise and supervise their studies as specified in Graduate School regulations. Students may not register for any courses without that advisor's prior approval.

By the time of the student's preliminary exams or dissertation proposal hearing, the committee must have at least three members, including the student's chosen major professor. At least two of the committee members must be UWM Geography graduate faculty; one external member approved by the program to possess appropriate expertise is automatically accepted by the Graduate School.

By the time the student is ready to defend their dissertation, the committee must have at least four members, including the major professor. At least three of the committee members must be UWM graduate faculty; one external member approved by the program to possess appropriate expertise is automatically accepted by the Graduate School. Students are allowed a maximum of six committee members for the defense. At least half the committee members must be UWM Geography graduate faculty.

### ***Foreign language requirement***

If appropriate to the proposed area of study, the student's committee will require that they acquire the necessary competence in a foreign language. The major professor will supervise the completion of this requirement with input from the committee as necessary.

### ***Dissertation***

The candidate must write an acceptable dissertation that demonstrates formulation, design, and independent execution of a significant research project. The dissertation must make an original contribution to knowledge in the field of geography. It may focus on geographical theory, methodology, data, or analysis, or it may involve collaborative approaches, interdisciplinary syntheses, and integrative solutions appropriate to the focus of the student's graduate program of study.

### ***Portfolio evaluation***

By the end of the first full academic year in the program, each student will undergo a formal portfolio evaluation by the members of the faculty in order to determine the student's readiness to continue in the program. This evaluation will include inspection of all written work produced in courses, commentary by relevant instructors, and any other materials the student chooses to submit. The possible outcomes of this review will be:

1. **Pass** (student continues with the normal second year of their program);
2. **Fail** (student is recommended for academic dismissal); or
3. **Probation** (student is counseled to take specific courses or other actions to achieve the necessary readiness to continue in the program). In the case of a recommendation of Probation, the student will be re-evaluated after an additional semester. If this second review does not result in a decision to PASS, the student will be recommended for academic dismissal.

### ***Residence***

The student must meet minimum Graduate School residence requirements of one continuous academic year of full-time graduate studies at UWM. This can be satisfied by completing 8 to 12 graduate credits in each of two consecutive semesters, or 6 or more graduate credits in each of three consecutive semesters, including summer sessions. Residence credit cannot be earned at the master's level or before the master's degree is awarded.

### ***Doctoral Preliminary Examination***

Each student will undergo a comprehensive written and oral examination by the end of their sixth semester in the program. The student's committee, advisor, and proposed dissertation topic must be approved formally by the Geography departmental faculty prior to the scheduling of these exams. A Proposed PhD Program/Plan of Study must be filed with the major professor prior to the preliminary examination. Successful completion of these exams leads to candidacy, when work on the dissertation can commence.

The student's advisor, as chair of the advisory committee, will organize and administer the examination. The content of the examination will be determined by the area of the student's interest. The scope of the examination will be determined by the student's advisory committee. A student judged qualified by the majority of the advisory committee will be admitted to candidacy. A student judged not qualified by the majority of the advisory committee will not be admitted to candidacy at the time of the examination but will be given an opportunity to retake the examination once, after a waiting period of at least one semester. At the discretion of the advisory committee, the second examination will be either a complete reexamination or a partial examination over the parts in which the student failed to qualify. A student receiving a negative vote from the advisory committee after the second examination will be recommended for academic dismissal. The student will be informed of the reasons for failure to qualify.

### ***Presentations***

Each doctoral student must make two presentations at department colloquia. The first presentation will be scheduled early in the student's program; it is designed to give the student an opportunity to present their dissertation proposal (20 minute talk and 10 minutes for questions). The second presentation will communicate the student's dissertation research findings (45 minute talk and 15 minutes for questions).

### ***Dissertation***

As mentioned above, the candidate must write an acceptable dissertation. The defense date for the dissertation must be set at least two weeks prior to the Graduate School deadline. The dissertation must be approved by the major professor and delivered to the student's advisory committee at least six weeks prior to the defense date. A student must submit the dissertation to the advisor with sufficient time to meet the committee's deadline. Exceptions to these deadlines under unusual circumstances must be approved unanimously by the student's committee.

### ***Dissertation defense and oral presentation***

The candidate must, as the final step toward the degree, defend the dissertation before the advisory committee. For the dissertation defense, the student will participate in a formal oral examination with their committee. The defense typically begins with a presentation of 15 - 20 minutes, in which the student summarizes the purpose, methods, key findings, and significance of their research. In some cases, the presentation may extend to approximately 30 minutes—particularly if a committee member is participating remotely and was unable to attend the earlier colloquium presentation. This is followed by a period of questioning from committee members, who will ask for clarification, probe the student's understanding, and discuss the broader implications of the work. After the questioning concludes, the student will be asked to step out of the room while the committee deliberates on the outcome. The student is then invited back in and informed of the committee's decision, which may include final recommendations or required revisions. If the candidate passes the defense, the advisory committee will recommend to the Graduate School that a degree of Doctor of Philosophy be conferred.

The PhD advisor is expected to serve as their advisee's faculty escort at the commencement ceremony. In the event the advisor cannot attend the ceremony because of an emergency or unavoidable conflict, the advisor should communicate promptly with the student and the Graduate Program Chair and, when possible, take the lead in finding an appropriate substitute.

### ***Submission of completed dissertation***

In addition to submission of the final dissertation to the Graduate School (according to its required procedure), the candidate must present to the Geography Department a professionally hard-bound copy that meets Graduate School specifications for quality. This copy will remain on file in the department.

### ***Time limit***

All degree requirements must be completed within ten years from the date of initial enrollment in the doctoral program.

### ***Special issues for directly admitted students***

Students directly admitted to the doctoral program after completion of their bachelor's degree will not earn a master's degree during the course of their studies. Further, formal doctoral status (which affects stipend rates and the ability to fulfill the residency requirement) will not be granted until the student has completed 24 credits in the program. Lastly, no more than 12 dissertation credits can be used to satisfy the 54-credit doctoral degree requirement.

## What is a Preliminary Examination?

The preliminary examination or prelims exam for short is a milestone on the academic journey to graduating with a PhD. Its main purpose is to assess the doctoral student's competency and readiness to commence dissertation research. Once the student successfully passes the prelims they become a PhD candidate and have reached dissertator status. Students may opt to enroll for a minimum of 1 graduate credit in the semester in which they are preparing or completing prelims. They will still be considered full-time for financial aid, assistantships, etc. **Once a student reaches dissertator status they are required to always bin in 3 credits, which is full-time. They can never take just 1 credit.** However, this does not fulfill residency requirements - a minimum of 8cr in each of two consecutive semesters, or a minimum of 6cr in each of three consecutive semesters. Summer may be included, but not required. If a student opts for a 1 credit semester they cannot meet residency and will need to submit a Request for Exception, to the Graduate School, to request a waiver of the requirement. It should include an explanation for why they were not able to fulfill the enrollment requirements.

Once the student has completed their research proposal and their advisor deems it suitable, the prelims can be scheduled, usually in semester six of a 5-year PhD program when the student has completed all their coursework requirements. However, since every PhD is unique there is flexibility in the timing of the prelims which may be taken earlier or later than semester six but within five years of initial enrollment. The timing will be determined in consultation with the student, the advisor and the committee.

At the time of the prelims, the committee must have at least three members, including the student's advisor. At least two of the committee members must be UWM Geography graduate faculty.

There are three components to the prelim exam:

### *Written Component of the Exam*

The written component of the prelims is administered by the advisor. It is a take-home, open-book exam usually consisting of three substantial questions. In most cases, two of the questions are posed by the advisor and the third by a committee member but it is not uncommon for all committee members to submit a question. Students are given 4-8 hours per question and expected to write 6-10 pages in answer to each question. However, this is just a guide and students should not despair if they do not fill the entire time allocated. The timing of the questions will be determined by the student, the advisor and the committee and usually spans 2-3 days. Students

are encouraged to make use of all available technology and materials they would expect to consult while doing research.

### *Oral Component of the Exam*

The oral component of the prelims takes place no more than four weeks after the written examination and is typically scheduled for a 2 hour period. The student will make a 15-20 minute presentation to the committee. Following the presentation, the committee members are invited to ask any questions they may have related to the presentation. Subsequently, the advisor will invite any discussion on the answers to the written questions. The advisor will administer the Prelim Exam Rubric for Geography to assess the quality of the presentation. Approval by the committee is required by Graduate School.

### *Colloquium Presentation*

The student will make a presentation of their dissertation proposal during the colloquium series once they have successfully passed the prelim exam. The proposal presentation typically lasts 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions. Where possible, these presentations take place in the Spring semester and two proposal presentations are given during one colloquium session.

### *Procedure/Checklist*

<b>Check</b>	<b>Geography Department Requirements</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	Student and advisor discuss taking the prelim exam	Semester 4/5
	At least three committee members are selected and provisional dates for the written and oral examinations agreed by the Advisor and Student.	Semester 5
	Graduate Program Chair notified by the Advisor (provision for presentation in colloquium series made)	
	Prelim committee announced at Faculty Meeting Research Proposal finalized and distributed to committee. Candidate prelim questions confirmed by committee. Timing of the examination decided upon. Written examination completed. Oral examination completed. Colloquium presentation completed.	Semester 6
	<b>Graduate School Requirements</b>	
	Login to Doctoral Milestones and complete the Application for preliminary exam AND the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Hearing Form  Student submits to GS, they approve, then program approves and student is granted 'prelim status'	Start of semester 6
	Student (including international students) should enroll in a minimum of 1 credit during prelim semester	

	Once the exam has been successfully passed – student must submit an application for Doctoral Dissertator Status	

#### Example timeline for Preliminary Examination

- Student sends proposal to Committee at beginning of December
  - The written examination will take place in first week of January
- Committee reads proposal and sends draft question(s) to Advisor by 1 January
  - The Advisor administers the written examination on ~7 January
- The Advisor subsequently sends the answers to the Committee
- Either the Advisor or Student checks availability of Committee for oral examination
  - The oral examination is conducted on 1 February

#### *What happens after the preliminary examination*

Following the successful outcome of the preliminary examination the student **becomes** a dissertator and should have completed all doctoral course work. Continuous registration must be maintained and students must register for three research/dissertation credits (Geography 990) each semester until the doctoral dissertation is completed, defended and filed with the Graduate School. **Once the Graduate School approves this step the student has Dissertator Status in PAWS.**

### Academic Exception Petition and how they work

Academic exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis. Petitions for course exceptions/substitutions are administered by the Graduate Committee Chair. Following consultation with the academic advisor, the following information should be provided in a letter (see examples below) to the Graduate Committee Chair:

1. The specific requirement/rule/exception pertinent to the petition must be identified.
2. The student must explain why they are seeking the exception. If it involves a course substitution or use of a prior course to meet a program requirement, the student should include the syllabus of the course they would like to use to meet the requirement.
3. The syllabus for the course they are seeking the exception for also needs to be included.

Once the Graduate Committee Chair has the information, they will bring it to the next Graduate Committee Meeting for review by the committee. Subsequently, the Graduate Committee Chair will inform the Departmental Chair of the intention to seek faculty approval/rejection of the petition at the next Faculty Meeting. Following the faculty meeting the Graduate Committee Chair will inform the student and advisor of the decision.

If a Graduate Student has already met the requirements for a required course they can petition to request the requirement be waived. The student must write to the Graduate Chair outlining how they have already met the requirements for a particular required course and ask for a waiver. The student will not get credit for the course they will simply not need to take the course. For example, GEOG726 is a required course for graduate students, if a student has taken a higher level course such as GEOG826, they can petition to have GEOG726 waived. In this case the student would write a letter to the Graduate Committee Chair stating that, since GEOG826 is a higher level course than GEOG726 and that they believe the requirements for this course have been met and would like to petition to waive GEOE726. In another scenario, a student may have completed relevant classes in another

program. In this case, the student would submit the syllabus for the course they took in a different program plus the GEOG726 syllabus and the grad committee would compare them. If they deemed the syllabi were similar they could agree to waive the requirement for the student to take GEOG726.

#### **EXAMPLE 1**

Dear [graduate committee chair],

Following consultation with my academic advisor [name of advisor] I wish to petition to waive the requirement [specify the requirement]. I have completed a similar course [name the course] in a different institution [name the institution]. [provide specific examples from the previous course and how they match with the course you are seeking to waive] and therefore have met this particular requirement.

Thank you for your consideration,

[student name]

#### **EXAMPLE 2**

Dear [graduate committee chair],

Following consultation with my academic advisor [name of advisor] I wish to petition to waive the requirement [specify the requirement]. I am currently TA for [name the course] which is a higher level than [name the course you want to waive] and therefore have met this particular requirement.

Thank you for your consideration,

[student name]

These examples can be used to seek a petition or if they do not apply to your specific case you can write your own letter.

## Exiting the program

Once a student has decided to leave the program they should notify, in writing, the Graduate School, their Advisor and the Department Chair. The notification can be as simple as 'I no longer wish to remain in the Geography Graduate program at UWM' and can be copied to all necessary recipients.

It is recommended that following unanswered 3 emails from an advisor and non-enrollment in classes for a semester the student is considered to have exited the program.

## Student and TA Evaluation

Each year, typically in November prior to the December department meeting, faculty will complete the Graduate Student Annual Review form for each of their advisees. The aim of the review is to track student progress in coursework, research and their assistantship. Following the Department meeting a retreat will be hosted to discuss each student with the aim of identifying any concerns and implementing a plan to address these issues. This form is shared with the student. The process of distributing the Review forms and hosting the retreat lies with the Graduate Committee Chair.

## Graduate Student Representative

Serving as a graduate student representative can be a rewarding and impactful experience and we encourage all our students to participate. Representatives play a crucial role in ensuring that student voices are heard in decision-making processes within the department and promotes advocacy for fellow students. Acting as a representative also provides opportunities for professional development through enhancing leadership, teamwork and networking opportunities. In addition, serving as a representative can help contribute to positive change through advocating for improvements in policies, services, etc. On a personal level, acting as a representative can enhance one's resume and can promote a sense of civic responsibility.

Graduate student representatives serve as a liaison between graduate students and faculty. Typically two elected representatives attend monthly faculty meetings. Graduate students interested in serving as representatives are usually nominated either by putting themselves forward or being nominated by peers. At the beginning of each semester(why not each year???) the current graduate student representative will solicit nominations from eligible department of geography graduate students. Once the nominations are made an election is held. The vote may be conducted either in person or through an online voting system. The candidate with the highest number of votes becomes the representative and serves for a single semester.

- **Eligibility:** any currently enrolled geography graduate student in good academic standing within the program.
- **Rationale:** To ensure continuity in service and transfer of knowledge from one academic year to the next it is important to ensure that one of the grad reps is experienced while the other is the most recently elected.
- **Term:** the duration of each term is one semester, Graduate students can hold the position for 4 terms (??) during their program.

The duties of a graduate student representative can include the following:

- **Attend faculty meetings:** Graduate student representatives are expected to attend monthly faculty meetings, participate in discussions and provide the student perspective on relevant matters.
- **Liaise with the graduate student body:** Communicate information discussed at the faculty meetings with peers and gather feedback.
- **Advocate for student interests:** advocate for the interests and needs of graduate students such as addressing policies, services or any matters that impact graduate students.
- **Build community:** organize regular social events for graduate students and the annual departmental Fall picnic in conjunction with the Department Chair.

Overall, becoming a graduate student representative is a multifaceted experience that combines advocacy, leadership and personal/professional development. It provides an opportunity for students to actively contribute to the improvement of their academic community.

## Academic Leave of Absence

An academic leave of absence (ALA) for graduate students is a temporary break from academic pursuits for specific reasons such as personal, medical or professional circumstances and is subject to Graduate School guidelines. Leave should be requested for the shortest time needed. If the duration of leave extends beyond three consecutive academic year semesters the student will be discontinued and required to apply for readmission.

The request for an ALA is initiated by the graduate student. They should contact their advisor or the Graduate Program Chair to discuss the request. The Graduate School [guidelines](#) should be followed.

## Student health and wellness

If a graduate student is experiencing health concerns while in the Geography Department seek help from fellow students, faculty, the administrative staff or anyone who is around. The Graduate Chair, if available, will help direct you to the student health and wellness center, in the North West Quadrant.

Students who pay segregated fees are eligible for University Health Services (<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu>). The [Student Health and Wellness Center](#) provides a range of counseling services and mental health resources to all students.

## Deferment policy for incoming graduate students

We expect applicants to apply to our program for the academic year in which they intend to enroll. However, on occasion a student may encounter circumstances which prevent them from attending in which case we grant deferments on a case-by-case basis. The graduate committee will review the deferral application, make a decision and take it to the faculty for approval. Deferral approval is not guaranteed.

Funding is not guaranteed to move with the deferral. If a deferral request is made due to circumstances outside the control of the applicant, such as, issues with visa approval, etc., then the applicants original application will carry over to the following fall. The original program funding, if granted, will move with the deferral. However, if a deferral request is made with no clear and justifiable reasoning then the applicant will be reviewed as a new applicant and considered for funding with all incoming applicants.

### *Procedure*

The graduate student must formally request to defer admission until the following fall. The student must write a letter to the Chair of the Graduate Program in Geography explaining the reason(s) for requesting a deferral. This letter will be considered by the graduate committee and a decision whether to accept or reject the deferral request will be made. Subsequently, the decision will be taken to the faculty for consideration. If granted, the deferral is normally for one year only.

### *Notes*

An applicant who requests and is approved to defer admission is considered under an obligation to enroll and attend the graduate program for the next available start term.

The first day of the fall semester is the deadline for submission of deferral requests for fall-term applicants. Deferral requests will not be considered after this date.

Only one deferral request will be accepted per student. Note that we cannot guarantee that deferral options will be available in future years.

The student first makes the request through the Graduate School and they will communicate the decision to the student.

## Graduate-level independent study courses

GEOG 888 Candidate for Degree. 0 cr. Grading S/U. Graduate students register for GEOG 888 if they are pursuing a Master's program. Graduate students (Masters only) register for GEOG 888 if they have complete all credit requirements, have no Graduate Assistantship or other sources of funding but still need to finish and defend their thesis.

GEOG 889 Internship in Geography. 1-6 cr. Grading S/U. Graduate students (PhD or Masters) register for GEOG 889 if they are doing an Internship in Geography.

GEOG 890 Research and Masters 1-6 cr. Thesis. Grading S/U. Graduate students register for GEOG890 if they are conducting research related to their Master's thesis.

GEOG 990 Research and Doctoral Dissertation. 1-12 cr. Grading S/U. Graduate students (usually ABDs) register for GEOG 990 if they are conducting research related to their Doctoral Dissertation.

GEOG 999 Independent Work. 1-6 cr. Grading A-F. Graduate students (PhD or Masters) register for GEOG 999 if they are doing Independent work in Geography. This is what doctoral students should register for if taking one credit in the semester of their prelims.

### *How to register for GEOG 888, 899, 890, 990 or 999*

In order for graduate students to register for any of the above courses they need to discuss, with their advisor, which option is the most suitable for their needs. Then they must provide the following information to Niko,

- name of advisor,
- course number, and
- semester in which the course will be taken

With this information, Niko can set it up in PAWS. Then the student can register for the course in PAWS as usual.

## Graduate School Exchange Programs

The Graduate School has exchange agreements with Marquette University (with the Graduate School and with the Graduate School of Management) and the Medical College of Wisconsin (the Graduate School). If a UWM course you need will not be offered at a convenient time in a particular semester, you can see if Marquette or the Medical College has a course you can take instead. Also, if UWM does not offer a course which would fit with your program of study, you can see if it is offered at Marquette or the Medical College.

The exchange agreements allow you to take classes at Marquette and/or the Medical College without paying tuition to those institutions. Instead, you take a UWM extra-mural course which carries the credits and the grade of the Marquette or Medical College course. Here's what you need to do to be an exchange student:

- Work with your UWM advisor to identify courses at Marquette or the Medical College which you need or want to take.
- Let Chris Parks in the Graduate School ([ccp2@uwm.edu](mailto:ccp2@uwm.edu)) know that you are planning to take a course or courses at Marquette or the Medical College.
  - Courses taken via the exchange must be approved by your graduate program.
  - Your program office can email Chris to let him know the course(s) is/are approved
- Apply for graduate non-degree status as an exchange student at Marquette or the Medical College.
  - Both institutions have special applications for the exchange.

- Chris will verify your eligibility to be an exchange student to the target institution.
  - Once you are accepted as a non-degree student, you will receive access to register at the target institution.
- Register at Marquette or the Medical College.
  - Your tuition at the target institution will be waived under the exchange agreement.
- Register in PAWS for the extra-mural course for Marquette or for the Medical College.

At the end of the semester, the Graduate School will receive a transcript from the target institution, and the information for the course(s) will be posted in PAWS under the extra-mural course. Please contact Chris if you have any questions about our exchange agreements or the application process.

## Departmental funding opportunities

In addition to University financial aid and Graduate School financial support the Geography Department offers a range of fellowship, travel and research funding opportunities for graduate students. Geography Graduate Assistantships are available to all incoming graduate students that applied by the December 1 deadline. Available positions are allocated between newly entering graduate students and continuing graduate students each year. Continuing graduate students must be making satisfactory academic progress and adequately performing their assistantship duties to be considered in “good standing” for continued support.

- Masters candidates in good standing are eligible for two years of departmental financial support.
- Students admitted to the doctoral program with master’s degrees, in good standing, are eligible to receive four years of departmental support.
- Students directly admitted to the doctoral program (after their bachelor’s degree) are eligible for five years of departmental support, provided that they remain in good standing.
- Doctoral students who have reached dissertator status may be offered teaching assistantships beyond the above eligibility criteria as part of their professional development, based on departmental needs.

In addition to TA and RA (less common) assistantships, the Geography Department offers the following financial support:

- Greater Milwaukee Foundation Mary Jo Read Geography Fellowship
- Greater Milwaukee Foundation Mary Jo Read Geography Travel Grant
- Clinton Edwards Student Research Fund

### *Greater Milwaukee Foundation Mary Jo Read Geography Awards*

Dr Mary Jo Read, former lecturer in the Geography Department at UW-Milwaukee, bequeathed an endowment with estimated assets of more than \$1 million, to provide merit-based fellowships and research travel grants to students who demonstrate academic excellence in the field of Geography.

*Greater Milwaukee Foundation Mary Jo Read Geography Fellowship: Graduate Student*

The MJR Fellowship provide additional financial support to those graduate students holding teaching or research assistantships. Incoming students are automatically considered for the fellowship funding if their applications arrive by December 1. Whereas, continuing students seeking an assistantship or Mary Jo Read Fellowship for the next academic year should submit an application to the Department Chair.

Both new and continuing students should also create a profile on UWM’s Scholarship Portal. Your profile is an initial one-time setup that will match you with all available scholarships and awards. It is important that you complete the profile both for this opportunity as well as all other opportunities available campus-wide. After the initial setup, students must reactivate and update their profile at minimum once per year between October 15 and May 15 (updating twice per year is recommended).

In addition to the general application, students should also complete the Letters & Science profile which consists of just one item – upload a copy of your most recent transcript.

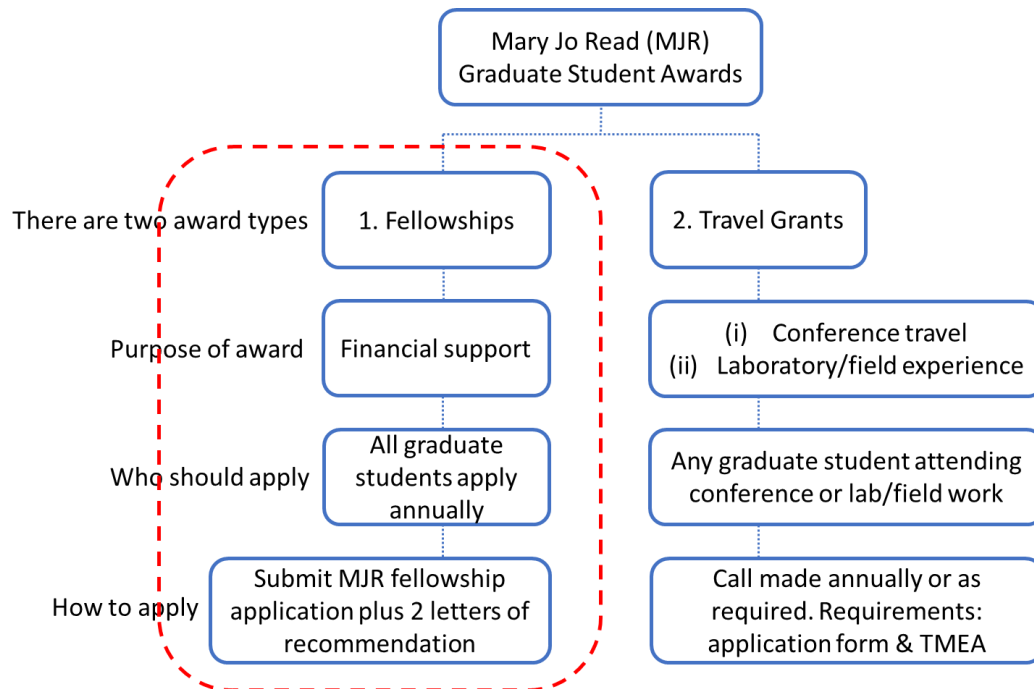
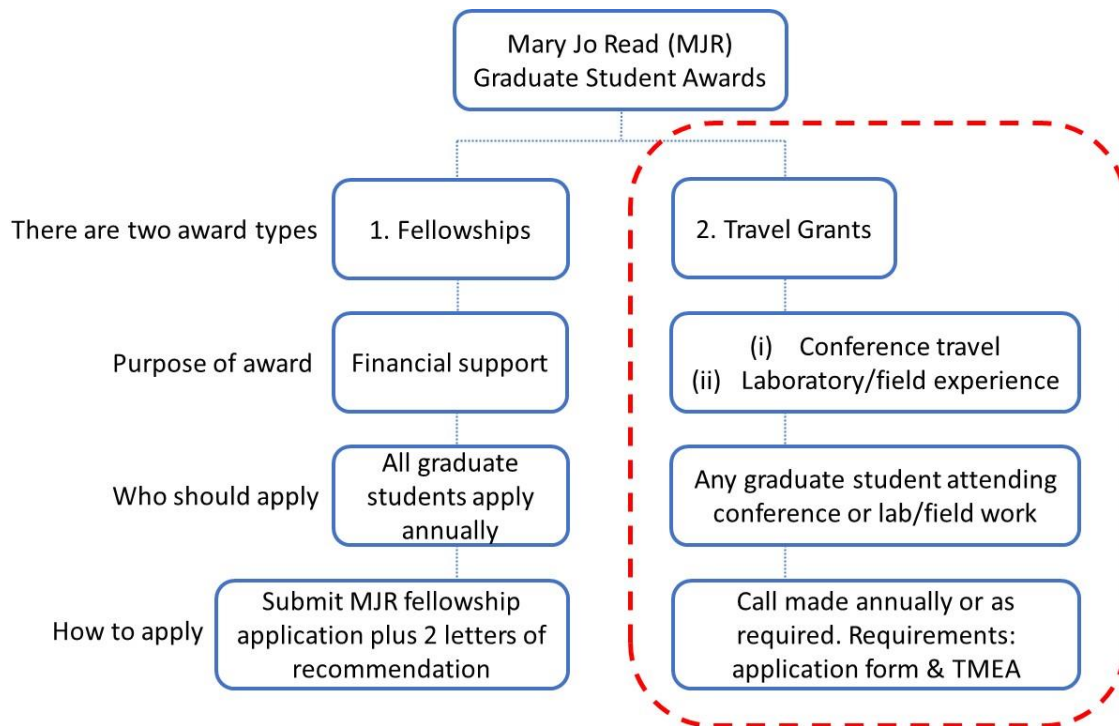


Figure 1 Illustration of the funding available to geography graduate students through the Mary Jo Read (MJR) Geography Fund which consists of two types of funding (i) MJR Fellowships (indicated by the red dotted line) and (ii) MJR Travel Grants.

## Greater Milwaukee Foundation Mary Jo Read Geography Travel Grant Fund for Graduate Students

This award (indicated by the red dotted line) relates specifically to travel only and was created through an endowment from Dr Mary Jo Read. The aim of the award is to provide funding to support graduate student travel to (i) present research at major academic conferences or (ii) gain field or laboratory experience to facilitate research. The total annual fund available varies from year to year, and therefore so too will the amount available to students. Due to the year to year variation in funding amount, in some years travel funding may be available for students to attend more than one conference. In this case, students are welcome to apply to attend an additional conference/workshop/meeting specific to their research with approval of their advisor.



### Funding rules

- An application must be approved before the associated TMEA\* can be submitted.
- To qualify for the travel fund graduate students must give a presentation at the conference.
- The total amount of funds requested is not guaranteed.
- A one-page report on travel accomplishments must be submitted to the Department Chair after completion of the travel.

Applications to attend the Spring AAG (or similar) conference can be submitted to the Department Chair by the announced **fall** deadline. Applications to attend meetings at other times during the year and applications requesting funding below \$500 should consult the Department Chair. These applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Only complete applications will be considered. Once approved, students can then submit a TMEA following the guidelines provided by the Department Chair.

Applications will be reviewed by faculty and results announced to students by the Department Chair after the following Faculty meeting.

\*A Travel and Miscellaneous Expense Authorization (TMEA) form <https://uwm.bpligix.net/workspace.aspx> is required for reimbursement. It details all expenses, purpose and justification associated with the proposed travel.

## *Graduate Student Guide to Conference Attendance*

Attending academic conferences is an excellent way to present your research, network, and stay informed on the latest developments in your field. Attending conferences can be a pivotal part of your graduate experience. Plan thoughtfully and consult with your advisor to make the most of these opportunities. This guide will help you navigate the process of selecting and applying to conferences, as well as securing funding and advisor approval.

### **1. Selecting a Conference**

- **Relevance:** Choose conferences that align with your research interests and academic goals.
- **Scope and Impact:** Consider conferences where leaders in your field attend or present, as well as the potential for high-impact networking opportunities.
- **Advisor Recommendation:** Discuss potential conferences with your advisor to ensure they align with your research and academic trajectory.

### **2. When to Apply**

- Conference application deadlines vary widely. Typically, you should look to apply **4–6 months in advance** of the conference date.
- Start preparing your abstract or proposal early to allow for feedback from your advisor.

### **3. Applying for the Milwaukee Foundation Mary Jo Read (MJR) Geography Travel Grant**

- The MJR Travel Grant is available to support graduate students to present their findings at one major conference per academic year. However, in some years travel funding may be available to support students to attend more than one conference/meeting/workshop.
- **Eligibility:** All Geography graduate students are welcome to apply and must agree to submit the relevant Travel and Miscellaneous Expense Approval form.
- **Application Process:** The department chair will make the call annually. The call will include the application form and information on the process. You will provide the title of the conference, your presentation title and anticipated costs.
- **Deadline:** Applications can be submitted to the Department Chair at any time. Applications will be considered at the monthly faculty meeting. Therefore, it is advisable to submit applications at least one week prior to a faculty meeting to avoid delays in approval.

### **4. Advisor Approval**

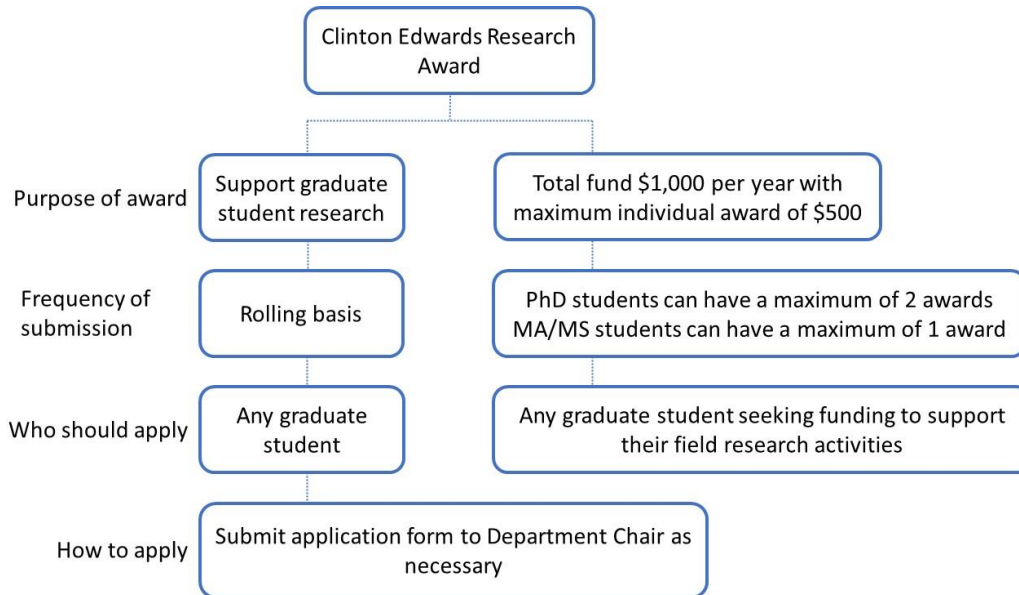
- Discuss your conference plans with your advisor **at least one month before** the application deadline or registration date.
- This ensures alignment with your research schedule and that your advisor can support and approve your attendance.

### **5. General Tips**

- **Budgeting:** Estimate costs for registration, travel, lodging, and meals. Consider additional funding options if available.
- **Networking:** Prepare by researching other attendees, presenters, and potential contacts in advance.

## Clinton Edwards Graduate Student Research Fund

This award, created in 2007 to honor the legacy of former UW-Milwaukee Geography Professor Clinton R. Edwards, provides small amounts of funding to support graduate student research expenses. The total annual fund available is \$1,000 and Graduate Students are encouraged to apply for up to a maximum of \$500. The purpose of the award is to cover research needs, such as archival material, specialized software, local travel, payment of research participants, etc.



### Funding rules

- A maximum individual sum of \$500 may be awarded in any one academic year.
- PhD students are eligible for up to 2 awards whereas MA/MS students are eligible for one award.
- Any equipment purchased will become the property of the Geography Department upon completion of the project.

Applications can be submitted any time during the year but will be considered during the following Faculty meeting. Only complete applications will be considered by the Department chair. Once approved students can work with Niko to purchase the approved items using the Department P-card.

Applications will be reviewed by the Leadership team and results announced to the student by the Department Chair following the meeting.

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### **2. When to Apply**

- Conference application deadlines vary widely. Typically, you should look to apply **4–6 months in advance** of the conference date.
- Start preparing your abstract or proposal early to allow for feedback from your advisor or peers.

### **3. Applying for the Milwaukee Foundation Mary Jo Read (MJR) Geography Travel Grant**

- The MJR Travel Grant is available to support graduate students to present their findings at one major conference per academic year. However, in some years travel funding may be available to support students to attend more than one conference/meeting/workshop.
- **Eligibility:** All Geography graduate students are welcome to apply and must agree to submit the relevant Travel and Miscellaneous Expense Approval form.
- **Application Process:** The department chair will make the call annually. The call will include the application form and information on the process. You will provide the title of the conference, your presentation title and anticipated costs.
- **Deadline:** Applications are due by December 1.

### **4. Advisor Approval**

- Discuss your conference plans with your advisor **at least one month before** the application deadline or registration date.
- This ensures alignment with your research schedule and that your advisor can support and approve your attendance.

### **5. General Tips**

- **Budgeting:** Estimate costs for registration, travel, lodging, and meals. Consider additional funding options if available.
- **Networking:** Prepare by researching other attendees, presenters, and potential contacts in advance.

## Professional Development Resources

There are a variety of resources available to assist with your development as a scholar, a teacher, and a professional. The following are some places to start. Also discuss discipline-specific resources with your advisor.

- GRAD 801: Preparing Future Faculty & Professionals  
<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/professional-development/grad-801-preparing-future-faculty-professionals/>
  - This is a 1 credit seminar course
- Graduate School Preparing Future Faculty & Professionals Workshop Series  
[\(http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/professional-development/\)](http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/professional-development/)
- The Graduate School provides a range of Career Resources  
<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/#career-resources>
- Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (<https://uwm.edu/cet/>)
- AAG Career Resources (<https://www.aag.org/jobs-careers/>)
- AGU Webinars in Professional Development (<https://webinars.agu.org/categories/professional-development/>)

## Tips for International Students

### *STEM Designation*

In January 2022 the US Department of Homeland Security recognized Geography as a STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and Maths) Field. The Geography Department at UWM has been granted STEM Designation. This allows nonimmigrant students studying geography to apply for the STEM OPT program (Optional Practical Training Extension for STEM students) which provides a 24-month extension of their post-completion OPT. Most students will be on an F1 visa which provides up to 12 months of OPT employment in their major area of study. Any issues graduate students have on VISA/immigration status must be directed to the Center for International Education.

### *Summer Funding*

The Geography Department does not offer summer funding opportunities for graduate students, nor does it provide a summer internship course. Students in the US on an F1 visa (almost all international students) are restricted to 20 hours per week of employment to remain compliant with visa rules, and it must be on campus only. This is a rule of the US government, not UWM. For international students, off-campus work would be allowed only after you have Curricular Practical Training (CPT). You can apply for CPT in the CIE portal. After approval, the CPT information will show on your I-20. The eligibility for CPT, work hours with CPT, and more information can be found at [Curricular Practical Training – Center for International Education \(uwm.edu\)](#).

On-campus employment is a benefit of F-1 student status and requires no special authorization. On-campus employment eligibility ends on the day the student completes all their degree requirements. Check out, suitable on-campus employment options available to international students, that do not require changes to their immigration status, [here](#):

Exploring on-campus jobs can help you gain experience and support your finances. Below are recommended options:

- Handshake Platform: Visit Handshake for on-campus job postings.
- Start your search in spring for better chances and a smooth transition.

- Research/Project Assistantships: Watch your email for potential summer positions from different departments/units
- Physical Job Postings: Check bulletin boards across campus for additional job opportunities.
- Connect with SET: Reach out to the Center for Student Experience and Talent (SET) for comprehensive on-campus employment support.

### *International Student Scholarships*

In order to get paid on time, students need to register for classes well before the semester begins. For spring, aim for January 1; for fall, aim for August 1 - otherwise, your payment may be delayed. [For our department, this applies to anyone receiving Mary Jo Read funding.]

## Departmental Logistics

### *Offices and keys*

Shared office space is made available for current graduate students.

Keys for graduate offices, teaching areas and computer lab are loaned to graduate students while at UWM. Students can obtain keys from Niko Papakis ([npapakis@uwm.edu](mailto:npapakis@uwm.edu)). Students should return keys upon graduation, departure from the graduate program, or request of faculty and staff.

### *Security*

Because graduate students commonly work in the evenings and on weekends, it is especially important that the building remain locked for safety as well as security. Graduate students are given keys so that they can perform research in an unencumbered environment. With the privilege of 24-hour access comes your responsibility to ensure that the building remains secure.

The Campus Police and Student Services provide escorts for students in the evenings. They can be contacted in an emergency from any campus phone by dialing 9-911 or by calling (414) 229-9911 from a cell phone. For non-emergencies (including getting locked out of your office), call (414) 229-4627.

### *Department computers*

Computers are made available for current graduate students to use in coursework, teaching, and research. Although incidental personal use of computers is allowed, be sure to follow UWM guidelines on acceptable use of technology. For example, you should not be using university computers or e-mail to run a business or engage in political activism.

### *Photocopying and printing*

Use of the photocopier/printer is reserved for department-related work. TAs will be provided with a code for use in teaching.

### *A note on Teaching Assistant appointments*

The L&S general rule requires that TA appointments be at 50% in order to receive tuition remission and UWM employee benefits, such as health care. If a 33% appointment is required then special permission should be requested from L&S.