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Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences

Graduate Handbook

Policies, Procedures, and Recommendations

Academic Year 2018-19

**College of Arts & Sciences
University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

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3. Welcome from the Department Head

On behalf of our faculty, staff and students, I am very pleased to be able to welcome you to the graduate geology program in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at the University of Tennessee (UT). We have a long history, about a century, of geological education at UT. Our graduates have successfully pursued careers around the world, in just about every aspect of the earth sciences, including tenure-track faculty positions at top-ranked universities, staff scientists at national research laboratories, management positions in major oil companies, positions in many government agencies, and investigators with environmental consulting firms. I hope that you have an enjoyable and productive stay as a graduate student at UT. I look forward to meeting you, first as a student and later, as one of our alumni.

Regards, Michael McKinney, Head of UT Earth and Planetary Sciences

4. Introduction

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences is provided here for all graduate students. This manual resides in the Graduate Students section under Current Students on the Department website <<https://eps.utk.edu/graduate/index.php>>. It is a “living document” and is meant to provide the information you need to navigate the path toward your degree, including all the rules and regulations pertaining to your progress. As you read, remember that our policies may change, all with the aim of providing you with a useful, rigorous program that you can take confidently to the next stage of your career. So check the manual as you reach each milestone on your journey.

The governance of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences is set forth in the bylaws, which can be found in the About EPS section of the Department website <<https://eps.utk.edu/>>. The Department has a Head and several standing committees to conduct the business of the Department. The committee with which you will interact with the most (besides your thesis or dissertation committee) is the Graduate Program Committee (GPC), whose chairperson is the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS position rotates among the faculty members, and is usually a three-year term. The DGS serves as a liaison between the Department and the Graduate School on matters related to the graduate program, coordinates departmental and university orientations for incoming students, ensures graduate students and faculty are aware of, and meet, established deadlines for making satisfactory progress in the Department and for graduation, provides academic leadership in the Department for graduate program curricula, oversees annual progress and evaluation of graduate students, handles the processing of graduate student thesis and dissertation proposals, registers international students for English proficiency testing, and communicates with the Graduate Admissions Committee and faculty for admission processes. You will also interact with the Discretionary Funds Committee. This committee awards in-house financial aid for conference and workshop travel, and considers requests for support for out-of-the-ordinary situations.

You will get to know the office staff well. They can help you with important tasks, such as getting keys, getting a mailbox, getting paid, and other things. Just remember that the staff have the job of running the front end of the Department. You are expected to do your own teaching and research tasks (e.g., photocopying) and use your own resources. Office supplies are not for personal use. At end of your program you must return your keys.

You will also have the opportunity to work with some of the Department’s analytical facilities. Each of the laboratories in the Department or in other academic units is administered by at least one faculty member, and may be maintained and operated by a professional research staff person. Students should consult with the faculty member responsible for a specific instrument. The University requires mandatory training of faculty, staff, and students who use chemicals in the workplace. Nearly all of the analytical laboratories in the Department contain chemicals, which are inventoried every year. The University Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) provides numerous training events for chemical and physical workplace safety, and documentation is available online, including the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) “Right to Know” act <<https://ehs.utk.edu/>>. Some of the laboratory facilities also require Biological Safety training to use any instrumentation in those labs.

After suitable training and safety awareness, proficient graduate students can have direct access to many of the research facilities. However, some of the instrumentation requires extensive training and analyzing samples is

usually done under the supervision of a professional staff or faculty member. Graduate students may obtain the help of a staff person for consultation on the research, but as a general rule, research staff will not perform actual Thesis or Dissertation lab work; this is the student's responsibility. Also, use of departmental resources is not free, even if you are trained to use an instrument. Financial obligations to analyze samples and run instrumentation should be arranged (usually with your faculty advisor) prior to beginning any research project. Under no circumstances should a student enter a laboratory without the permission of the faculty member responsible for that facility. University research equipment cannot be used for personal gain.

All graduate students are encouraged to take and pass an approved course in "Responsible Conduct of Research." The official University-approved online course covering research responsibilities can be found here: <https://research.utk.edu/training-workshops/citi/>

The policies and procedures described in this manual are a superset of the policies set forth by the Graduate School. All Graduate School policies and regulations are in the Graduate Catalog <https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php> and at the Graduate School's website <https://gradschool.utk.edu/>. The Department's regulations fit within those of the Graduate School and this handbook should provide specific ways in which policies are carried out. If you find inconsistencies or mistakes in this manual, then please bring them to the attention of the DGS. *Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the University.* Under extenuating circumstances, all policies, requirements, and procedures outlined in this manual may be petitioned to the GPC.

For additional details about graduate studies please see the Graduate Catalog <https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>, the College of Arts and Sciences *Hilltopics* Student Handbook <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>, and the Graduate School website <https://gradschool.utk.edu/>. Information on appeals procedures can be found at <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/>.

Keep this manual close! Set your home page to the Department's home page <https://eps.utk.edu/>. If you have a question, then look it up on the web or ask your advisor. If you can't find a satisfactory answer, then please ask the DGS or a GPC member. We are here to help you resolve the unknowns.

4.1 Matriculation of Incoming Graduate Students

Once an incoming graduate student has received a letter of acceptance, the student should arrange to meet (in person, by email, or by phone) with their intended major advisor to discuss academic preparation for graduate studies and to select courses, including remedial courses, for the first semester. An advisor may seek the guidance of potential Thesis/Dissertation committee members, or other faculty closely aligned with the student's intended research area.

At least two to three months before classes begin, a welcome and orientation letter is sent from the DGS to incoming students. The letter includes information about payroll <https://payroll.tennessee.edu/forms.htm>, general departmental and University paperwork, and University policies. The University is required by Federal law to have all newly-hired employees complete an I-9 form (including U.S. citizens). This Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, form is used in the E-verify system in Tennessee (<https://www.tn.gov/workforce/employers/staffing-redirect/hiring-regulations/employment-verification.html>). A copy of an I-9 form with instructions is available at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-9>.

All incoming graduate students are required to participate in University orientations and departmental workshops that prepare the student for the upcoming semester. Dates for orientations and workshops are provided in advance to guarantee attendance. Some of the orientations, particularly for students appointed as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), require that the department pre-register students, and attendance is reported back to the department. In some instances, if a student is admitted on a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA), but will transfer to a GTA in the future, then the student will be notified by the DGS to attend relevant GTA orientations and workshops prior to the beginning of the first semester as a GTA. Incoming students meet as a group with the Department Head and DGS prior to the start of classes to discuss overall departmental matters and expectations of students. Incoming international students will be familiar with the Center for International Education (CIE) <https://international.utk.edu/>. Upon arrival at the University, international students need to check in with the

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) through CIE. If an international student does not check in with CIE or ISSS, the program will be terminated. There are separate, mandatory CIE orientations for international students, as well.

University policy requires international students or any student regardless of nationality whose first or native language is not English to pass a test in English proficiency prior to any GTA appointment involving classroom teaching. International students for whom English is a non-native language, and are admitted as a GTA, are required to take an International Teaching Assistant test, formerly known as the SPEAK® test, but now referred to as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview by computer program (OPIc). The OPIc establishes oral proficiency and is administered by the Graduate School. All prospective GTAs whose native language is not English must take and pass the OPIc test before assuming teaching responsibilities. The DGS registers new international students for the exam. More information can be found at <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>.

During a graduate student's first semester, with the guidance of the advisor, a committee of faculty will be formed to comprise the Thesis/Dissertation committee. Selection of individuals for this committee is important. The role of the Thesis/Dissertation committee is to work with the student to develop the best curriculum to ensure that coursework establishes necessary depth and breadth to master the intended research direction. For a Master's Degree candidate, this committee needs to have three faculty members; for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree, this committee should have four faculty members, including one from outside the department. The GPC approves membership of Thesis/Dissertation committees. Details about course requirements, committee composition, and other procedures are explained below.

Incoming students may also meet with members of the GPC, which is headed by the DGS. The GPC serves several functions for all graduate students in the department. Perhaps the most important role of the GPC is to act as an impartial body with which all graduate students can confidentially discuss all aspects of their program of study, relationships with advisor and committee, and life in the department and university. In many respects, the GPC represents the interface between the graduate student body and the departmental faculty. Changes in the rules that govern the Graduate Program are presented to the faculty through the GPC. In this regard, any comments about the Graduate Program can be directed to the GPC for consideration and possible action.

Also upon arriving, students are assigned office desk space in the Department. Any special needs should be requested through your advisor. Office and desk space priority is as follows: (1) full-time Ph.D. students; (2) full-time M.S. students; and (3) part-time graduate students. Your University-issued ID card is used to gain access to your office space and the building after hours. Requests for keys to specific rooms are made through the Department. Access to a research laboratory is done with the approval of your advisor and/or the faculty member responsible for a particular facility. Keys are picked up by the student at the Key Shop, and keys should be returned to the Key Shop prior to graduation.

4.2 EEO/Title IX/AA/Section 504 Statement

The University of Tennessee does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or veteran status in provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. This policy extends to both employment by and admission to the University.

The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex or disability in its education programs and activities pursuant to the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Inquiries and charges of violation concerning Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) or any of the other above referenced policies should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED), 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996, Phone: 865-974-2498, Fax: 865-974-0943, <https://oed.utk.edu/>. Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED), <https://oed.utk.edu/ada/>.

5. Faculty and Student Responsibilities

All faculty in the Department contribute to building a vibrant research and teaching environment through course instruction and active, commonly externally funded, research that involves dissemination through publications and conferences. Graduate students play a vital role in this mission and are expected to meet all Department, College, and University requirements in a timely fashion.

6. Admission Requirements and Application Procedure

The University of Tennessee operates on a three-semester academic year (Fall, Spring and Summer), and admission to the graduate program is permitted in any semester. For admission, a single application form is now used that includes information for both the Graduate School and the Earth & Planetary Sciences Department. Details are provided at <<https://eps.utk.edu/graduate/gradapply.php>>. The application must be completed online at <<https://www.applyweb.com/utg/index.ftl>>. Important note: The Department and Graduate School use an entirely online system for receiving graduate application forms, supporting documents, and letters of recommendation. Hardcopy materials sent through the mail are not accepted.

An applicant must provide the following information and files:

- 1) Names of two potential advisors. It is strongly recommended that students contact potential advisors about research projects before applying.
- 2) PDF files (optically scanned or "printed" to PDF files) of: a) Unofficial college/university transcripts (PDF file size of 5MB or less); b) A C.V. or resume (PDF file size of 2MB or less); and c) A statement of interests, typically related to research (PDF file size of 2MB or less).
- 3) The GPA from all colleges/universities previously attended.
- 4) General GRE exam scores (if they are available; if not, date of when exam will be taken should be provided).
- 5) Names and email addresses of two to three people who will serve as your references.
- 6) For foreign students who are not native English speakers, a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is needed. International students applications also require more time – see the websites <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/deadlines/>; <https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/admissions-for-international-students/>>.

The Graduate School and EPS may have different admission deadlines. In general, the Graduate School application due date is usually February 1st for Fall admission, or October 15th for Spring admission. Students applying for Fall admission are encouraged to complete applications by January 1st for full consideration by the Department. Applications received after these dates will be considered on a rolling basis if additional positions are available. The Graduate School can take from four to six weeks to process application materials before they are sent to the Department for evaluation. Therefore, students are encouraged to apply at least one month, and preferably two months, ahead of the Graduate School deadline to be considered for an assistantship.

GTAs are offered to exceptionally qualified students on a first-come, first-served basis. GRAs are typically funded by research grants to specific faculty, which usually is a student's advisor. Consequently, GRAs are offered by the prospective advisors to students who have demonstrated the necessary skills and a high-level of potential for a targeted research project.

Students are not normally admitted under non-degree status. Prerequisite for either graduate degree is a bachelor's degree in the geosciences or other field typically, but not exclusively, from the physical, natural, or life sciences or engineering. The Graduate School <<https://gradschool.utk.edu>> requires a minimum grade point average of 2.7 out of a possible 4.0, or a 3.0 during the senior year of undergraduate study. Applicants with previous graduate work must have a grade point average of 3.0 on a 4 point scale or equivalent on all graduate work.

Any person whose native language is not English must submit a TOEFL or IELTS score. Passing marks for admission consideration are 550, 213, 80, and 6.5 for paper-based, computer-based, internet-based (iBT) TOEFL, and IELTS, respectively. Official scores must be received directly from the appropriate testing service. The University of Tennessee's score reporting code for TOEFL is 1843. The score must not be older than two years.

Applicants who have received a degree from an accredited US institution in the past two years are exempt from the TOEFL or IELTS requirement.

Questions about research programs in specific areas, application delays, or financial aid should be addressed to the Chair of the Graduate Admissions Committee in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. The Department's telephone number is 865-974-2366. The email address is eps@utk.edu.

7. Financial Support and other Financial Information

7.1 Definitions

At the University of Tennessee, graduate assistantships are the primary source of funding for graduate students. Assistantships are offered by academic departments and administrative offices. An assistantship is a financial award to a graduate student for part-time work in teaching, administration, or research while pursuing an advanced degree. As such, a graduate assistant is both a student and an employee because the student receives financial support for graduate study by contributing to the teaching and/or research mission of the Department and the University.

Appointments are normally on a 25% to 50% full-time equivalent (FTE) basis, usually requiring 10 or 20 hours of service per week, respectively. Annual stipends are generally for nine month appointments, payable in twelve (12) monthly installments. The maximum number of years that a graduate student can be appointed to a 25% FTE or more assistantship is three years as a master's student, five years as a doctoral student, or eight years in doctoral programs in which students enter with a baccalaureate degree only. Requests for an extension beyond the maximum terms here specified must be made in writing by the academic unit to the Dean of the Graduate School. Established time limits for completion of graduate programs – six years for a master's program and eight years for a doctoral program – also apply to all graduate assistants.

A 50% FTE graduate assistant, in each of the categories of assistantships below, normally should enroll for 6-11 semester credit hours of course work. A 25% FTE graduate assistant, in each of the categories of assistantships below, normally should take 9-13 semester credit hours. Exceptions to the above must have prior approval of the Head of the Department. A student on a 50% FTE assistantship who takes at least six semester credit hours is considered full-time by the University, although the Department recommends a minimum of nine credit hours per Fall and Spring semester for financial aid considerations and to avoid additional health care costs to the student.

Additional information about assistantships is available at https://catalog.utk.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1473#poli_admi_grad_assi.

7.2 Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA)

Half-time GTAs undertake up to twenty (20) hour per week of teaching or lecturing responsibilities, typically in laboratory classes for introductory and upper-level geology courses, and grading in lecture courses. Required training sessions are held by the University and the Department to prepare and familiarize GTAs with the requirements and responsibilities of these positions. The immediate supervisor of GTAs is in charge of making GTA course assignments, coordinating schedules overseeing teaching expectations, and conducting training sessions.

International students or students regardless of nationality whose first or native language is not English are required to pass the ACTFL OPIc test in English proficiency prior to any GTA appointment involving classroom teaching. See the following website <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>.

Departmental GTAs receive a nine-month stipend (paid over 12 months), remission of tuition fees, and health insurance benefits. Students are responsible for University fee charges, and fees levied for student activities, technology, and transportation charges. Student GTA stipends may be supplemented during the summer by research funds. Students with GTA appointments are not permitted to hold jobs outside the department during the Fall and Spring semesters.

7.3 Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA)

GRAs are research appointments funded from external sources controlled by a member of the faculty. GRAs usually enable students to engage in original research related to their degree goals. Support can be made to any applicant admitted to a degree program, irrespective of any commitment of departmental support. GRA appointments are primarily governed by the availability of external research grants, and the project director or principal investigator (usually also the student's advisor) determines the duration of GRA appointments and awards. A GRA's immediate supervisor is the person who funds the appointment, such as a faculty advisor or the Head of the department. Appointments can be for any specified amount of time, such as a month, a semester, a full year, or for the duration of time a graduate student is actively pursuing their program of study (usually 4 semesters as a M.S. student and 8 semesters as a Ph.D. student). Students on GRAs associated with research grants should have tuition remission and health insurance benefits covered by the grant. Students are responsible for University fee charges and fees levied for student activities, technology, and transportation charges.

International students who are supported on a GRA are not required to take the OPIc English proficiency test.

7.4 Fellowships

A number of graduate fellowship opportunities are offered both within and outside of the University. Students are encouraged to look these over to see if they qualify to apply. Students receiving fellowships are supervised by their academic thesis/dissertation advisors. Graduate fellowships offered through the University are listed at: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/>

7.5 Employment Standards and Holidays

In addition to teaching obligations, the department participates in visible outreach efforts, including instruction at the McClung Museum, where graduate student volunteer participation is very strongly encouraged. Graduate students on half-time GTAs and GRAs work 20 hours per week on their assignments and are not permitted to hold employment outside the Department during the 9-month academic year (i.e., Fall and Spring semesters). GTAs can seek additional support or employment during the summer months. GTAs or GRAs with less than 50% appointments can hold outside employment, up to a total of 20 hours per week.

At the start of each semester, the graduate student should establish working hours with their advisor(s). Graduate students do not (usually) punch a time clock, although supervisors will expect students to maintain regular hours in the building, classroom, laboratory, and on campus. To conduct a research project, the expectation is that students are highly task-oriented. Depending on research demands and other obligations, graduate students may find themselves working more than the minimum time, working at night, on holidays, and on weekends. Graduate students should schedule absences with their advisor(s) and/or work supervisor to ensure that their absence will not conflict with research activities. Flexible work hours are both a necessity and a privilege for most graduate students, and flexibility should not be abused.

Holidays are established and annually published by the administration. Student employees may observe the same holidays as other University personnel. As part-time employees, students are not eligible for benefits such as accrual of annual (vacation) or sick leave. Excused sick and personal absences are a courtesy, but missing important assignments (especially teaching assignments) must be reported immediately to the immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in loss of the appointment and dismissal from the program.

7.6 Graduate Student Employee Insurance and Student Health Insurance

All graduate assistants (GTAs, GRAs) with at least 25% FTE are automatically enrolled in the Graduate Student Employee Insurance Program. The Student Health Center <https://studenthealth.utk.edu/> manages the health insurance program <https://studenthealth.utk.edu/health-insurance-records-requests/student-health-insurance/>. Students will have 100% of the premium paid by the University. Students can elect to add a spouse or dependent coverage at their own expense. If a student already has insurance coverage through another carrier, then this policy functions as additional coverage.

Students enrolled in ≥ 9 credit hours in any given semester retain health insurance benefits, but continuing coverage MUST be maintained by electing to pay a separate Student Health Fee via OneStop. This fee provides the student with access to the Student Health Center clinic (as the first point of health services provided through the health insurance), and the student will receive the UT Hospital discounts in case of an emergency. However, if a student decides not to pay this fee, and goes to the Student Health Clinic, the student will have to pay the fee then. If the student does not pay the fee, and is in an accident and has to go to the hospital, then the student will not receive the insurance discounts.

7.7 Loans

Students looking to get student loans can find information about loan options at: <<https://onestop.utk.edu/loans/>>.

7.8 Travel

Authorization for all travel must be requested before the trip is taken. Travel within the state of Tennessee does not need prior approval. Travel policies apply to all faculty, staff, undergraduate, and graduate students. A request for out-of-state travel is done with the help of the front office staff for conferences, workshops, for field or laboratory research, or while receiving academic credit or non-credit but sponsored by the Department or another academic unit, regardless of whether University funds are being used to pay for the travel. An example of University business travel without the use of University funds would be to give a talk at a conference when all the expenses are paid for by the host. Students can travel on a faculty member's travel authorization request for out-of-state travel. Anyone traveling on University-related business in a private vehicle must also have approved travel authorization from the Department head.

All travel abroad on University business, regardless of whether University funds are used, requires online registration of the international travel before commencing the trip. This should be done well in advance of the anticipated travel (i.e., months). Students traveling with a faculty member, on the faculty member's travel authorization request, must also register online. The online international travel registration process requires all travelers to purchase (\$25) the non-refundable International Teacher or Student ID card (ITIC/ISIC). More information can be found at <<https://budget.utk.edu/travel-fiscal-policy-705/>>. Registration provides emergency assistance from International SOS in the event of an emergency. More information can be found at <<https://cie.utk.edu/travel/>>.

Travel to conferences can be supported by a number of ways. Advisors may support students to go to conferences on research grants or other funds and students should ask their advisors about possible support prior to registering for or attending a conference. Students that are making presentations at conferences may be eligible for support through the Department's Discretionary Funds Committee and through the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) and the Dean of the Graduate School, information about which can be found at <<https://gss.utk.edu/travel-awards/>>. The GSS awards are made on the basis of merit, not need, and allow for partial reimbursement of transportation, lodging and registration expenses. The GSS has application deadlines.

7.9 Graduation Application and Fee

Graduate students apply for graduation at MyUTK <<https://myutk.utk.edu/>>, and a fee of \$30 for M.S. degree candidates, and \$75 for Ph.D. degree candidates, is charged for each degree to be awarded in that semester. The graduation fee is a one-time, non-refundable fee. There are no additional charges for the diploma. If a student does not graduate in the intended semester by the first or second deadline, then the student must reapply to graduate in the next semester, and must pay another graduation fee. Students, advisors, and Thesis/Dissertation committees should discuss when a student should apply to graduate to avoid paying for graduation multiple times.

7.10 Early Termination / Withdrawal

If a student is terminated or withdraws from a program prior to the end of the semester, then the student will be responsible for payment of tuition and other fees from the termination or withdrawal date until the end of the semester. The responsibility for paying tuition and fees will apply to all students, including those who have tuition

waivers during the semester in which they are terminated or withdraw early. If you are considering early withdrawal, then you should contact the Bursar's Office to inquire about the financial ramifications for early withdrawal. Please see the Graduate Catalog for additional information about early termination/withdrawal at: https://catalog.utk.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=2827#fees_fina_assi and <https://onestop.utk.edu/withdraw/>.

8. Registration and Advising

Registration for courses is done via the web at MyUTK <https://myutk.utk.edu/>.

Virtually all students select a major advisor before entering the Department. Some students may have two advisors (co-advisors). Once a student is in residence and begins to develop their research plans, the student and the advisor(s) discuss the best possible individuals to form a committee that will be best suited for supporting the student. The committee can also recommend relevant coursework. New incoming students need to talk with their intended major advisor(s) before registering for first semester courses. Returning students should have approval from their advisors/committee and adhere to their planned program of study before registering in subsequent semesters. Questions about coursework should be directed to the major advisor(s) or any member of the GPC. It is important to plan ahead for registration and do so before courses begin.

The Department offers lecture courses (typically 500-level) and seminar-oriented courses (typically 600-level) that are commonly 3 credit hours. Graduate classes with lecture (and/or seminar) and laboratory components may be 3 or 4 credit hours. Current course offerings are listed under Current Students at <https://eps.utk.edu/>.

Graduate students are required to maintain active status in their programs through continuous enrollment from the time of initial enrollment until graduation. They must register for a minimum of one (1) graduate credit hour per semester, excluding summer. To maintain full-time status, graduate students need to be enrolled for at least six (6) credit hours, although the department recommends a minimum of nine (9) credit hours per Fall and Spring semester for financial aid considerations and to avoid additional health care costs to the student. Typical course loads per semester are 9-12 hours. The maximum course load for a graduate student is fifteen (15) credits, but needs to be approved by the Department Head. Courses GEOL 500 and GEOL 600 are reserved for thesis and dissertation research, respectively. Once a Ph.D. student enrolls in GEOL 600, they must have continued enrollment including in the summer, with a minimum of three (3) credit hours per semester, until the student graduates.

In the summer, graduate students must enroll for at least three (3) hours if a student plans to use the building, any departmental or University facilities, or faculty time. Students typically enroll in the summer in GEOL 500 (M.S. thesis research), GEOL 600 (Ph.D. dissertation research), or another option decided upon by the student, advisor, and committee. Students must be enrolled in either GEOL 500 or GEOL 600 in the semester of defense and submission of the thesis or dissertation for graduation. Enrolling for 3 credits reduces the amount of fees that students have to pay, but changes health insurance coverage, as described in Section 7.6 (above). The only exceptions to summer enrollment accepted by the Graduate School are that a student is either completing an off-campus internship or is on an official leave of absence. But, even if off-campus, a student should register for 3 credits of GEOL 592 (Off-Campus Study). A student may register for GEOL 502, if they are not registered for any other courses, but will be using facilities and/or faculty time. Please consult the Graduate Catalog for details.

9. Degree Requirements

The Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences offers research-based Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees. Both degrees require original research presented in the form of a thesis or dissertation that must be found acceptable by a committee of faculty.

We expect all graduate students to familiarize themselves with the extensive information about the University of Tennessee and graduate studies <https://www.utk.edu>. Additional details pertaining to the Graduate Program, including financial aid, scholarships, and fellowships, can be found in the list of web pages identified below:

UT Graduate School: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/>
Graduate Catalog: <https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>
Graduation deadlines: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduation/graduation-deadlines/>
Theses & Dissertations: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/>
Forms: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>

The Department recognizes that all possible circumstances cannot be accounted for in this document and that exceptions to specific rules may be needed occasionally, which can be done by petition to the GPC. Petitions typically describe why a rule needs to be modified, and describes the desired solution for the student. The petition should be accompanied by a supporting letter from the student's major advisor(s) or committee.

9.1 Master of Science

All students enrolled in the M.S. program in Earth & Planetary Sciences are required to become familiar with University policies and regulations, as explained in the Graduate Catalog. Some parts of these policies are excerpted here for convenience.

9.1.1 University Course Requirements

A candidate for a Master's degree must complete a minimum of thirty (30) hours of graduate credit in courses approved by the student's master's committee. In our program, six (6) semester hours of credit in the major must be earned in course GEOL 500 (thesis) while the student is conducting research and preparing the thesis. Hours applied to the Master's degree may be entirely from one major subject or may be distributed to include one or two minor areas.

Courses numbered between GEOL 400 and GEOL 500 can be taken for graduate credit, but not all 400-level courses count for graduate credit. At least two-thirds of the minimum required hours in a master's degree program must be taken in courses numbered at or above the GEOL 500 level. Only six (6) thesis hours (GEOL 500) may be counted toward this requirement. For coursework taken at other institutions, refer to section in the University Graduate Catalog on Transfer Credits.

9.1.2 Departmental Course Requirements

In addition to the University requirements, students pursuing a M.S. degree must enroll in GEOL 595 every semester they are in residence unless they are enrolled in GEOL 596 or course, internship, research or teaching conflicts preclude them from being present. Each student must enroll in course GEOL 596 one time during their residency, preferably in their 2nd or 3rd semesters. A student may apply a maximum of 2 credits of GEOL 595 and 1 credit of 596 towards graduation.

To graduate, each student is required to have had a committee-approved "field experience," where a student has demonstrated proficiency in field-based Earth Sciences. In many cases, this represents an undergraduate field camp course, although there are many acceptable alternatives.

9.1.3 Thesis Committee

A committee is composed of a major advisor(s) and at least two other professors holding the minimum rank of Assistant Professor or other approved faculty, including lecturers or adjunct faculty. In ordinary circumstances, the committee will be formed in the student's first semester and meet formally with the student at least annually to direct and assess student progress and academic standing. The committee must be formed by the time a student applies for *Admission to Candidacy*.

9.1.4 Thesis Proposal

All students pursuing the M.S. degree must do independent original research leading to a thesis to graduate. To be sure a student is prepared for the intended research project a proposal, outlining the project, must be submitted and

accepted by the entire thesis committee, recommended to be by the *end of week 13 of a student's second semester*. Because the proposal writing process can take considerable time with revisions, students should plan to get working early to meet this deadline. Failure to meet this deadline may result in the student receiving a warning or disciplinary action, including dismissal, from the GPC. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to make sure annual committee meetings occur, and that thesis committees keep students on acceptable time frames for completion of degree.

The proposal should be no longer than 10 pages of single-spaced, 12-point font size, text (including figures, but not references or additional materials). Course work taken (with semesters and grades) and planned should be included. Proposal style and content can differ depending on sub-discipline, so students must work closely with their major advisor(s) and committee to avert problems in getting the proposal passed. Upon successful completion and acceptance of the proposal by the thesis committee, the major advisor should submit the approved proposal package to the DGS in time to meet the Fall (September 1 or December 1) or Spring (February 1 or May 1) submission deadlines, which extend to the next business day if those dates occur on a weekend or a University holiday. The GPC will not accept proposals during the summer. The GPC evaluates committee composition in relation to the proposed research project.

9.1.5 Admission to Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy indicates agreement that the student has demonstrated ability to do acceptable graduate work and that satisfactory progress has been made toward a degree. This action usually connotes that all prerequisites to admission have been completed and a program of study has been approved.

The application for the Master's degree is made as soon as possible after the student has completed any prerequisite courses and nine (9) hours of graduate coursework with a grade point average (GPA) 3.00 or higher in all graduate work. The Admission to Candidacy form must be signed by the student's committee and the Director of Graduate Studies; all courses to be used for the degree must be listed, including transfer coursework. The committee signatures on the form must match the signatures that will be on the final defense forms. If the committee composition changes between filing the Admission to Candidacy forms and the final defense, then an addendum to the candidacy paperwork must be submitted to the Graduate School before the defense. The student must submit the Admission to Candidacy form to the Graduate School no later than the last day of classes of the semester before the semester in which he/she plans to graduate.

9.1.6 Thesis

A student must present a written thesis documenting independent original research that must be defended and approved by the thesis committee before a student can graduate. The specific form of the thesis is coordinated by the major advisor and thesis committee. Students are expected to work closely with their advisors during the evolution of the research and during the preparation of the thesis itself. It is expected that research for the M.S. degree also lead to a peer-refereed publication.

There are University formatting guidelines and Graduate School deadlines related to the thesis that all students are required to follow. The thesis must be scanned with university-approved plagiarism detection software prior to the thesis defense. Your major advisor must confirm, at the time the thesis is submitted to the Graduate School, that the thesis has been analyzed using the university-approved plagiarism detection software. Additional information regarding, formatting, deadlines, and university-approved plagiarism detection software can be found on the Theses and Dissertation webpage at: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/>

9.1.7 Thesis Defense

All students are required to have a defense of their research, attended by their committee, and open to the rest of the Department. An electronic copy of the thesis should be circulated to the faculty, along with an announcement of the defense, at least one week before the defense date. In most cases, the thesis defense represents an oral presentation of 20-30 minutes followed by an open question and answer session. Once this is complete, the thesis committee continues with a private examination period, in which the results of pass or fail are determined. Forms that must be signed by the committee can be located at <https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>. The committee signatures on

the final defense form must match the signatures filed on the Admission to Candidacy form. See Section 7.9 (above) for information about apply for graduation.

9.1.8 Time Limit to Completion

A time line of the major events in completion of the M.S. degree is included in the Annual Graduate Student Evaluation and Checklist located at the end of this manual. According to the Graduate School guidelines, students pursuing the M.S. degree have a total of six calendar years to complete their degree. **In Earth and Planetary Sciences, students are expected to complete a M.S. degree in two calendar years (four semesters including two summers).** Departmental support is guaranteed for up to four (4) semesters, assuming acceptable progress. Please note: paperwork in anticipation of graduation begins months in advance of the anticipated graduation date.

Requests for GTA extensions beyond this support window are assessed individually but are not guaranteed, as it is departmental policy to support qualified incoming students over extension requests. Towards the end of each semester, generally in June and November, the Chair of GAC sends out a solicitation to students at the end of their guaranteed support window for extension requests. In response, a student may submit an extension request along with written justification and a letter of support from their advisor. The GPC prioritizes the extension requests, which are reviewed by the departmental faculty, and notifies students of their status. Extension requests are prioritized according to specific criteria, with Ph.D. students, especially those without a previous M.S. degree, no previous extensions, health-related delays, research-related delays, and/or a participation in an internship receiving higher prioritization.

9.2 Doctor of Philosophy

9.2.1 University Course Requirements

All students enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Earth & Planetary Sciences are required to become familiar with University rules and regulations, as explained in the Graduate Catalog. Some parts of these rules are excerpted here for convenience.

The student's program of study is subject to Graduate Council policies and individual program requirements. The program of study, as listed by the student on the Admission to Candidacy form, must be approved by the doctoral committee. Doctoral programs include a major field or area of concentration and, frequently, one or more cognate fields. Cognate fields are defined as a minimum of six (6) semester hours of graduate coursework in a given area outside the student's major field.

A Master's degree is usually a prerequisite for entry into the doctoral program, but students can also be admitted directly into the Ph.D. program after completing a Bachelor's degree. Candidates for the Ph.D. must complete a minimum of 24 hours of graduate coursework beyond the Master's degree. If the doctoral candidate does not possess a Master's degree, the candidate must complete a minimum of 48 hours of graduate coursework beyond the baccalaureate degree. A minimum of 12 of the 24 hours, or 30 of the 48 hours for candidates without a Master's degree, must be graded A-F. Courses numbered between 400 and 500 may be taken for graduate credit, but not all 400-level courses can be counted for graduate credit. At least two-thirds of the minimum required hours in a Ph.D. program must be taken in courses numbered at or above the 500 level. A minimum of six (6) hours of the student's coursework must be taken in University of Tennessee courses at the 600 level (however, for EPS see section 9.2.2 below), exclusive of dissertation. In addition, 24 hours of course GEOL 600 Doctoral Research and Dissertation are required. Once a student has enrolled in GEOL 600, this course must be registered for in each succeeding semester, including the summer.

9.2.2 Departmental Course Requirements

In addition to those listed above, the Department has a number of compulsory additional course work requirements for the Ph.D. All students pursuing a Ph.D. degree must enroll in course number GEOL 595 every semester they are in residence unless they are enrolled in GEOL 596 or course, internship, research or teaching conflicts preclude them from being present. Each student must enroll in course GEOL 596 one time during their residency, preferably

in their 2nd or 3rd semesters. A student may apply a maximum of 3 credits of GEOL 595 and 1 credit of 596 towards graduation. All Ph.D. students are required to enroll in a minimum of nine (9) hours of 600-level courses, excluding GEOL 600 (this requirement supersedes the University requirement).

In order to graduate, each student is required to have had a committee-approved “field experience,” where a student has demonstrated proficiency in field-based Earth Sciences. In many cases this represents an undergraduate field camp course, although there are many acceptable alternatives.

9.2.3 Dissertation Committee

A committee is composed of a major advisor who directs the dissertation research, and at least three other faculty members all holding the minimum rank of Assistant Professor or other approved faculty, including lecturers or adjunct faculty. At least two of the committee members, including the major advisor, must be tenured or tenure-track UT faculty. At least one committee member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student’s major field. Such external members can be drawn from other UT departments or from other institutions.

In ordinary circumstances, the committee is formed in the student’s first semester and meets formally with the student at least annually to direct and assess student progress and academic standing. The committee is formed by the end of the second semester of enrollment in the Ph.D. program. A student’s committee must be nominated by the Department Head and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Forms for Ph.D. students can be found at the Graduate School website, as well as on the Department webpage <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>>.

The dissertation committee works with the student to determine the program of study, including all course work, which is tailored to each student’s research and intellectual endeavors. Another role the committee serves is to track student progress, which it does via an annual meeting with the student. A student should expect to consult frequently with their committee during the course of the research.

9.2.4 Dissertation Proposal

All students pursuing the Ph.D. degree must do significant, independent, original research leading to a dissertation in order to graduate. In order to be sure a student is prepared for the intended research project, a proposal outlining the project must be submitted and accepted by the dissertation committee prior to acceptance by the GPC submission deadlines (recommended to be by December 1 or May 1). Proposals are typically presented to the committee during a student’s third semester of continuous enrollment if they entered with a M.S. degree, or by the same above dates of a student’s fourth semester if they entered with a B.S. degree. Submission of the proposal is done in connection with taking a Preliminary Examination (see below).

Because the proposal writing process can take considerable time with revisions, students should plan ahead to meet this deadline. Failure to meet this deadline may result in the student receiving warning and/or disciplinary action, including dismissal, from the GPC. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to make sure annual committee meetings occur, and that dissertation committees keep students on acceptable time frames for completion of their degrees.

The proposal should be no longer than 15 pages of single-spaced, 12-point font size, text (including figures, but not references or additional materials). Course work taken (with semesters and grades) and planned should be included. Proposal format can differ depending on sub-discipline, so students must work closely with their major advisor and committee to circumvent problems in getting the proposal passed. Upon successful completion and acceptance of the proposal by their committee, the student and major advisor should submit the approved proposal package to the DGS in time to meet the Fall (September 1 or December 1) or Spring (February 1 or May 1) submission deadlines, which extend to the next business day if those dates occur on a weekend or a University holiday. The GPC will not accept proposals during the summer. The GPC evaluates committee composition in relation to the proposed research project.

9.2.5 Preliminary Examination

A Preliminary Exam designed to test the student's breadth and depth of knowledge in order to conduct advanced research should occur by no later than the end of a student's third semester if having entered with a M.S. degree, or the fourth semester if having entered with a B.S. degree, just like the dissertation proposal.

The examination consists of written questions submitted by each committee member (commonly administered by the major advisor) followed by an oral exam. There is no strict format to the written examination. Written questions may be either open book or closed book; each examiner determines the time constraints for their specific exam. The oral exam follows successful completion of the written questions. The oral examination is generally two hours in duration. At the discretion of the committee, the examination is open to all faculty, but your committee decides whether or not you passed the exam.

Results of the combined written and oral exams are determined by the committee at the end of the oral exam and results transmitted to the student and DGS. There are three potential outcomes of the Preliminary Exam: (1) Pass. A score of pass means the student has satisfactorily completed both parts of the exam and is free to continue in their program of study; (2) Conditional Pass. A score of conditional pass means that a student has passed one part of the exam and failed the other, or successfully completed most aspects of both exams, but still has minor gaps that need further attention before the student can move forward. The dissertation committee determines what remedies are necessary and places limits on the timing of completing the remedies. Once a student has successfully met these additional requirements, then a score of Pass is registered. If the student does not meet the additional requirements or has a repeat fail in the same part of the exam, a score of fail is registered for the student and the program is terminated by the end of that semester; (3) Fail. A score of fail means that a student has not met the requirements necessary for advanced research and so is dismissed from the program at the end of the semester the exam is taken.

9.2.6 Admission to Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy indicates agreement that the student has demonstrated the ability to do acceptable graduate work and that satisfactory progress has been made toward a degree. This action usually connotes that all prerequisites to admission have been completed and a program of study have been approved.

A student may be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree after: (1) passing the preliminary examination; (2) completing all graded graduate course work requirements; and (3) maintaining at least a B average in all graded graduate course work.

Each student is responsible for filing the Admission to Candidacy form, which lists all courses to be used for the degree, including courses taken at the University of Tennessee - Knoxville, or at another institution prior to admission to the doctoral program. The form is signed by the doctoral committee and the DGS. The committee signatures on this form must match the signatures on the final defense form. If the committee composition changes between filing the Admission to Candidacy form and the final defense, then an addendum to the candidacy paperwork must be submitted to the Graduate School before the defense. Admission to Candidacy must be applied for and approved by the Graduate School at least one full semester prior to the date the degree is to be conferred.

9.2.7 Dissertation

A written dissertation showing evidence of significant, independent, and original research is required of all Ph.D. students. The exact form of the dissertation is determined by the major advisor working in connection with the student. High value is placed on publication in peer-refereed journals, and it is common to expect a dissertation to lead to several publications.

The publication ("in press" is acceptable) of at least one research paper on the dissertation topic (not previous work) in a peer-refereed journal or equivalent peer-reviewed outlet is required by our department prior to the dissertation defense. The student is expected to be the senior author and have made a major contribution to the development, execution, and writing up of the study; the publication must be acceptable to the major advisor and dissertation committee for inclusion into the dissertation. This requirement provides experience in the timely reporting of scientific results and professional development in considering and responding to intellectual critique.

The University has specific formatting requirements for dissertations, as well as a specific set of deadlines in advance of graduation. The dissertation must be scanned with university-approved plagiarism detection software prior to the dissertation defense. Your major advisor must confirm, at the time the thesis is submitted to the Graduate School, that the dissertation has been analyzed using the university-approved plagiarism detection software. Additional information regarding, formatting, deadlines, and university-approved plagiarism detection software can be found on the Theses and Dissertation webpage at: <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/>>. Forms to be submitted with the dissertation can be located at <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>>. All UT Dissertations are deposited electronically in TRACE and are available here <https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/>.

9.2.8 Dissertation Defense

Once the committee determines that sufficient written progress on the dissertation has occurred, and the department's publication requirement has been met, the student may schedule an oral defense of their research. Electronic copies of the dissertation and published paper(s) should be circulated to the faculty, along with an announcement of the defense, at least one (1) week before the defense date. If an accepted publication is not yet in print, then circulation of a copy of the submitted manuscript, along with proof of acceptance from journal editorial staff, will fulfill the publication requirement.

The defense has two main parts: a public presentation with accompanying question-and-answer session followed by a private defense with the dissertation committee. The public presentation should last 30-40 minutes and focus on the results of the dissertation research. Forms that must be signed by the committee are located at <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>>. The committee signatures on the final defense form must match the signatures filed on the Admission to Candidacy form. See Section 7.9 (above) for information about apply for graduation.

9.2.9 Time Limit to Completion

A time line of the major events in completion of the Ph.D. degree is included in the Annual Graduate Student Evaluation and Checklist located at the end of this manual. Students pursuing the Ph.D. degree have a total of eight (8) calendar years to complete their degree from the time of first enrollment in the program. We expect that the Preliminary Exam will be taken in a student's third or fourth semester. A Ph.D. student who has not passed the preliminary exam by the end of their fourth semester is subject to dismissal for lack of satisfactory progress. **In Earth and Planetary Sciences, students are expected to complete a Ph.D. degree in four-to-five calendar years (eight-to-ten semesters, including four summers), depending on entry conditions.** Please note: paperwork in anticipation of graduation begins months in advance of the anticipated graduation date.

Departmental support is guaranteed for up to eight (8) semesters, assuming acceptable progress. Requests for GTA extensions beyond this support window are assessed individually but are not guaranteed, as it is departmental policy to support qualified incoming students over extension requests. Towards the end of each semester, generally in June and November, the Chair of GAC sends out a solicitation to students at the end of their guaranteed support window for extension requests. In response, a student may submit an extension request along with written justification and a letter of support from their advisor. The GPC prioritizes the extension requests, which are reviewed by the departmental faculty, and notifies students of their status. Extension requests are prioritized according to specific criteria, with Ph.D. students, especially those without a previous M.S. degree, no previous extensions, health-related delays, research-related delays, and/or a participation in an internship receiving higher prioritization.

9.2.10 Language Requirement

The department does not have a foreign language requirement.

9.2.11 Concurrent Master's Degree Program

Currently enrolled Ph.D. students who plan to complete the M.S. degree, while maintaining enrollment in the Ph.D. program, can submit a Request for Concurrent Master's Degree form to the Graduate School graduation office, at least two (2) weeks prior to the M.S. degree graduation application submission deadline. This process should be done in consultation with the student's advisor(s) and Dissertation Committee. To be eligible a student should: a)

not have a prior Master's degree in Geology; b) have successfully completed all University and departmental course requirements for the regular Master's degree; c) have demonstrated a committee-approved proficiency in field-based Earth Sciences; d) have a Ph.D. dissertation proposal accepted; e) have passed his/her preliminary exams; and f) have at least one first author paper submitted for consideration for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. No fee will be assessed for form submission, but the DGS must sign the form <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/request-for-concurrent-masters-degree/>>.

10. Examinations

10.1 M.S. Defense

See section 9.1.7 above.

10.2 Ph.D. Preliminary Examination

See section 9.2.5 above.

10.3 Ph.D. Dissertation Defense

See section 9.2.8 above

11. Standards, Problems, and Appeals

11.1 Rights and Responsibilities, and Grounds for Dismissal

A graduate student is a person officially admitted to and enrolled in the Graduate School at the University of Tennessee. Programs, policies, and procedures, as well as minimum requirements, are outlined in the Graduate Catalog <<https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>>. Each student has a responsibility to be familiar with the regulations of the Graduate School and the Department. The Graduate School and the Department are responsible for maintaining current policies. Changes to policies are processed through the Graduate Council. The rights and responsibilities of all students, including policies governing student conduct and academic integrity, are discussed in *Hilltopics* <<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>>.

The first priority of all graduate student assistants must be satisfactory progress in their scholastic program, as described in the Online Graduate Catalog <<https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>>. Acceptance of an assistantship by a graduate student implies that the student will make satisfactory progress concurrently in work assignments and in their scholastic program. For a graduate student to remain in good academic standing, the student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale. All courses taken for graduate credit count in the computation of GPA. Course grades of I (incomplete) turn into an F, if the course requirements are not met. Students are required to work with the course instructor to complete obligations in a timely fashion. More information about academic standards and GPA can be located in the Graduate Catalog.

Any student whose GPA falls below 3.00 is placed on academic probation by the University. A student has one semester to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.00 or higher in the following semester (excluding summer). If a student on probation has another semester with a GPA below 3.00, then they will be terminated from their program of study. A graduate student can also be dismissed from the program if he/she consistently fails to meet deadline dates, does not make satisfactory progress toward the degree, or perpetrates academic dishonesty and other actions detrimental to the University (including but not limited to racial, religious, or sexual harassment, theft, workplace use of alcohol or illegal drugs). Academic dismissal of a graduate student from the Department can be initiated by the student's faculty work supervisor (i.e., person responsible for GTA assignments or faculty member sponsoring the GRA) to the DGS and/or Head, and after consultation with the student's Thesis/Dissertation committee. The DGS or Head notifies the student in writing and sends a copy of the letter to the Graduate School.

The Department takes all matters about academic honesty and integrity very seriously. All graduate students are expected to adhere to the highest of standards. Violations are handled on an individual basis with the course instructor, DGS and/or GPC, and/or Department Head. Details about academic (dis)honesty can be found by clicking on the “Academic Policies and Requirements for Graduate Students” link in the Graduate Catalog found here <<https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>>.

Graduate assistants (GTAs and GRAs) who perform satisfactorily are normally reappointed, up to the maximum time limit established by the Department (4 semesters for M.S. students and 8 semesters for Ph.D. students). In the event that a GTA or GRA does not meet specific appointment expectations, reasons for not renewing the appointment and withdrawing financial support of a GTA or GRA should be given at least one month prior to the end of the appointment. Students on work-related assistantships (GTAs and GRAs) may be evaluated in writing (email is fine) by faculty work supervisors (i.e., person responsible for GTA assignments or faculty member sponsoring the GRA) throughout the semester. The process of non-renewal and loss of financial support is initiated in writing by the immediate supervisor, after consultation with the student’s Thesis/Dissertation committee to the DGS, who then notifies the GPC and Department Head. Consultation between the DGS and Head with the Graduate School and Human Resources may be required, depending on the situation. Examples of when a GTA or GRA will not be renewed include, but are not limited to, discontinuation of program or grant, significant neglect of duty, unsatisfactory academic performance or progress toward a degree, and non-compliance with University policies. A student may be placed on financial support probation, in which case a set period of time is given (within a semester, for example) for the student to achieve satisfactory performance, meet academic expectations, or fulfill work-related duties outlined by the supervisor and Thesis/Dissertation committee approval.

It is the responsibility of the student to meet the retention standards, as set forth by The Graduate School and the Department. Failure to maintain acceptable academic standards or appropriate professional behavior may result in termination from the graduate program in the Department and/or from the Graduate School.

11.2 Annual Evaluation

Every graduate student must have an annual face-to-face meeting with their faculty advisor that results in a written evaluation by their advisor; a copy is delivered to the student and signed by both advisor and student. The student’s signature does not indicate agreement with each point of feedback, but rather indicates that he/she has read the evaluation, understands the feedback received, and has been given an opportunity to ask questions. The written evaluation, signed by both advisor and student, should be forwarded by the advisor to the DGS who will place a copy in the department’s personnel files. The annual evaluation process must be completed by **August 31st** each calendar year.

The Annual Graduate Student Evaluation and Checklist form that must be completed at the face-to-face meeting with your faculty advisor is located at the end of this document (section 12.3). It can also be downloaded as a Word document from the Department’s graduate student web page <<https://eps.utk.edu/>>. The form contains detailed instructions for completion and submission.

11.3 Leave of Absence and Readmission after Withdrawal

On rare occasions, a student may request a leave of absence from their degree program. Students should consult with their advisors and committees, the DGS, and the Department Head. The DGS can transmit a letter requesting a leave of absence to the Graduate School. To assist the student and the Department with planning for a break in enrollment, a leave of absence should be requested at least two weeks before the beginning of the semester for which the leave is requested. The time during which a student is on a leave of absence will not be counted towards time to degree, and there is a two (2) year limit. Students who have been on an approved leave of absence are eligible for reinstatement to active status and do not have to apply for readmission. Forms for leave of absence and reinstatement are available at <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>>. For more specific guidelines regarding a leave of absence from continuous registration of GEOL 600, please refer to the Graduate Catalog. International students must consult with an international student advisor to discuss how a leave of absence affects their immigration status.

A graduate student who did not apply for a leave of absence and who has not registered for graduate courses at the University of Tennessee for one term, other than summer, will become inactive, and may not continue in his/her program until readmitted. A readmission application must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions at least two weeks prior to the first day of class of the desired term of reentry. A non-refundable Readmission Fee of \$30.00 must be submitted when applying for readmission. Upon readmission, students will also be responsible for tuition payments for retroactive enrollment for all of the missed terms during which no leave of absence was granted. A student who has attended another institution since enrollment at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville must submit one official transcript showing all course work and any degrees earned at that institution. The student will be notified when action has been taken by the department/program and the Office of Graduate Admissions. A student who is permitted to enroll and is subsequently denied readmission will receive credit for courses completed successfully. Future registration will not be allowed until readmission is granted.

11.4 Change of Degree Program

11.4.1 M.S. to Ph.D.

A student who wishes to change his/her degree from M.S. to Ph.D. must do so after consultation with the Thesis committee. Notification to the DGS and Graduate Program Committee (GPC) should be done by the student's thesis advisor, and be endorsed by the Thesis committee. A student should be making exemplary progress toward a M.S. degree prior to changing to the Ph.D. program. The transition should typically be made during the first year of M.S. studies. Acceptance into a new degree program is contingent upon review and recommendation to that department by the GAC. If the student is not accepted into the Ph.D. program, then he/she remains in the M.S. program. At the discretion of the GAC, the student can be awarded additional GTA support. The results of each request for program change are communicated to the student by email. After notification that a student is admitted to the Ph.D. program, the student must complete a Graduate School Change of Program Application <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/change-of-program/>>, and pay the small application fee online. The student must then complete all of the necessary requirements to obtain the Ph.D. degree, as outlined in section 9.2 (above).

11.4.2 Ph.D. to M.S.

At any point during the Ph.D. program, if a student wishes to change their degree program from Ph.D. to M.S., then the student must notify his/her advisor and Dissertation committee. Notification is sent to the DGS and GPC. A student may also be requested by the advisor and Dissertation committee to change from Ph.D. to M.S. if satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. degree is not being made. Once admitted into the M.S. program, the student's guaranteed funding on a GTA or GRA (or combination of funding) should be adjusted to two (2) years, unless other arrangements are made with the GAC. After the student is notified by the GPC/GAC, the student needs to complete a Graduate School Change of Program Application <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/change-of-program/>>. To obtain a M.S. degree, the student must also complete the necessary requirements for the M.S. degree, including completing six (6) credits of GEOL 500, as outlined in section 9.1 (above).

11.5 Grievances and Appeals

Any grievance must be brought to the attention of the student's faculty advisor and/or the DGS and/or GPC, as appropriate, as soon as possible. If these discussions fail to resolve the issue, then a written appeal can be submitted to the Head of the Department no later than 30 days after the incident that occasioned the complaint. If the departmental appeal procedure does not lead to resolution of the complaint, then an appeal can be made at the College level. Information on the College of Arts and Sciences' policies with respect to appeals and grievances can be found in *Hilltopics* <<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>>. This appeal must be filed within 30 days of a final decision at the departmental level. Only after an appeal has been duly processed, without resolution, through appropriate procedures at the departmental and college levels, should a complaint be brought to the Graduate School. Information on the Graduate School policy on appeals and grievances is available here: <<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/>>.

12. Appendices

12.1 Relevant Web Pages

- ACTFL OPIc Testing Program <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>
- Best Practices in Teaching <https://gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship/bpit/>
- Center for International Education <https://international.utk.edu/>
- College of Arts & Sciences <https://artsci.utk.edu/>
- Costs & Funding <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/>
- Counseling Center <https://counselingcenter.utk.edu/>
- Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences <https://eps.utk.edu/>
- Department of Environmental Health & Safety <https://ehs.utk.edu/>
- Graduate School <https://gradschool.utk.edu>
- Graduate Catalog <https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>
- Graduate Student Appeals Procedure <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/>
- Graduate Student Senate <https://gss.utk.edu/>
- Graduate and International Admissions <https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/>
- Graduation <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduation/>
- International House <https://ihouse.utk.edu/>
- Judicial Affairs <https://web.utk.edu/~osja/>
- Library Website for Graduate Students <https://www.lib.utk.edu/info/grad/>
- Mandatory Reporter Training
(Click on link, sign in, then go to “Add a Course” at top right & select “Training” from dropdown)
https://cas.tennessee.edu/cas/login?TARGET=https%3A%2F%2Fcas.tennessee.edu%2Feverfi%2Futk%2F%3Fc_id%3D21
- Office of Equity and Diversity <https://oed.utk.edu>
- Office of Information Technology (OIT) <https://oit.utk.edu/>
- Office of Multicultural Student Life/Frieson Black Cultural Center <https://multicultural.utk.edu/>
- Research Compliance/Research with Human Subjects <https://research.utk.edu/compliance/>
- Thesis/Dissertation Website <https://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/>
- Wellness <https://wellness.utk.edu/>

12.2 Forms and Other Resources

Required forms for the topics below are at the Graduate School website: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>

- Graduate Student Deadline Dates
- Admission to Candidacy Application – Master’s Degree
- Doctoral Committee Appointment Form
- Admission to Candidacy Application – Doctoral Degree
- Scheduling Defense of Dissertation Form
- Graduate Student Travel Award Forms

12.3 Annual Graduate Student Evaluation and Checklist

The Annual Graduate Student Evaluation and Checklist form is reproduced below. This document is also available for download as a Word file on the Department’s graduate student web page <<http://eps.utk.edu/>>. The form contains detailed instructions for completion and submission. It must be completed and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by **August 31st** each calendar year.

Annual Graduate Student Evaluation and Checklist

Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

THIS FORM IS DUE ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 31st

Do the following:

- 1) Complete this form electronically leaving sections 2 and 3 blank. Do not sign section 1. Send the completed form to your advisor for review.
- 2) Meet with your advisor and have him/her complete the form electronically, print it, and sign it.
- 3) Sign section 1 of the printed copy to acknowledge receipt and that you have had an opportunity to discuss the evaluation with your advisor, ask questions, and respond.
- 4) Obtain the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Dr. Annette Engel (Strong Hall 713).
- 5) Scan the signed hard copy and turn in the original to Melody Branch (Strong Hall 602F).
- 6) Keep a copy of the scanned form for your records and e-mail copies to your advisor and the DGS (aengel1@utk.edu). The e-mails should have the subject line: **Annual Evaluation (Name, Year)**

Fill the form out completely to the best of your ability for each question. Referring to an attached CV as an answer is unacceptable. If a category is not applicable, please type 'NA'. Use whatever space is needed to complete this form. Note: only students who have completed at least one semester of coursework are required to complete this form.

1. Student information and signatures

Name of Student _____ E-mail: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date Signed _____

Name of Advisor(s): _____

Signature of Advisor(s): _____ Date Signed _____

Signature of DGS: _____ Date Signed _____

2. Advisor Evaluation

Initial the appropriate line:

_____ Student is making Satisfactory/Adequate Progress

_____ Student is Not Making Adequate Progress

3. Advisor Comments

Include strengths, weaknesses, suggestions for improvement etc.

4. Student Response

Optional

5. Cumulative Record

Check degree program: M.Sc. _____ Ph.D. _____

Date of enrollment in program (semester/year): _____ / _____

Note any approved leave:

Thesis/Dissertation Committee (to be formed in the first year with meetings at least annually)
Committee members (3 minimum for M.Sc., 4 minimum for Ph.D.):

- | | | |
|----|------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Name _____ | Dept./Affiliation _____ |
| 2. | Name _____ | Dept./Affiliation _____ |
| 3. | Name _____ | Dept./Affiliation _____ |
| 4. | Name _____ | Dept./Affiliation _____ |
| 5. | Name _____ | Dept./Affiliation _____ |

Note: Ph.D. students must have at least one committee member from another academic unit

Dates of annual committee meetings (month/year)

List from earliest to most recent:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Assistantships received

List by Academic Year, Type (GTA, GRA), Source (Department, other/specify)

Outline your schedule for the following

Provide actual or planned dates (semester/year):

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Planned</u>
- Completion of required coursework	_____	_____
- Committee acceptance of thesis/dissertation proposal (<i>2nd semester for M.Sc. students, 3rd or 4th semester for Ph.D. students</i>)	_____	_____
- Completion of preliminary candidacy exams for Ph.D. students (<i>3rd semester for students with an M.Sc. degree; otherwise 4th semester</i>)	_____	_____
- Completion of Mandatory Reporter Training (<i>See Section 12.1 Relevant Web Pages for details</i>)	_____	_____
- Completion of all relevant safety training (chemical, bio., radiation etc.)	_____	_____
- Completion of primary data collection	_____	_____
- Completion of data analysis	_____	_____

Date of submission of Admission to Candidacy form

(after completion of coursework for M.Sc. students; after completion of coursework & Preliminary Exam has been passed for Ph.D. students)

Date of defense scheduled through Graduate School

(after at least 1 paper has been published for Ph.D. students)

Date of acceptance of thesis or dissertation proposal

Publications (published, in press, accepted, or submitted; list in order from most recent, including all published in the past year)

Oral and poster presentations at professional meetings and other forums

(list in order from most recent)

Academic Awards

6. Coursework: Attach a photocopy/pdf of your graduate transcript (mandatory)

Indicate which courses you are currently taking, and any planned for next semester
(provide course number, course title, semester/year)

List all of the 600-level seminar courses you have taken, or are currently taking
(provide course number, course title, semester/year)

Have you taken GEOL 596? (should be taken in your 2nd or 3rd semester; respond with a “yes” or “no” and provide semester/year when taken or planned)

Have you met the committee-approved “field experience” requirement?
(if yes, provide details; if no indicate how and when this requirement will be met)

7. Activities over the past year

Teaching (list all lab sections taught and/or guest lectures given)

Student evaluations (attach a photocopy/pdf of the SAIS evaluations for labs that you taught)

Research (list major accomplishments, data collection activity etc.)

Grant applications, proposals submitted, funding received
(list the agency, award type, date, duration, amount, status)

Other employment, student activities/representation, etc.

If you received a ‘Student is Not Making Adequate Progress’ in your last review, indicate specifically what you have done to address the issues of concern

8. Planned activities for the next academic year (including summer)

Describe your plans for teaching, research, publishing, funding, meetings/presentations, including any relevant dates/deadlines