

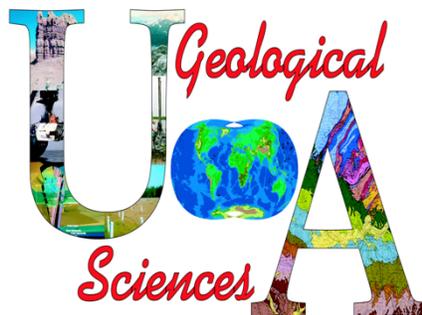
The Department of Geological Sciences Graduate Handbook 2021-2022



Annapurna National Park, Central Nepal



Columbus Air Force Base Mississippi, USA



1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome. This handbook provides Graduate Students with a written statement of policies and degree requirements established by the Department of Geological Sciences (DGS). Graduate students that enter the DGS at the start of Fall 2021 or Spring 2022 are subject to the policies in this handbook. This information is supplemental to the Graduate School Catalog (<http://graduate.ua.edu/catalog/>), which summarizes the general policies and requirements of the University of Alabama (UA) Graduate School. DGS policies have been established by the faculty of the DGS within the guidelines outlined by the Graduate School and the Graduate Council. These guidelines are administered by the Department Chair, the Departmental Graduate Program Committee, and the student's Advisor and Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee. Students must consult the Graduate School website for current policies, deadlines and required forms (<http://graduate.ua.edu/students.html>).

2. ADMISSION AND RETENTION

Applicants to the M.S. program are required to have a bachelor's degree in geology or a related discipline (e.g., biology, chemistry, math, physics, or engineering) to be admitted. Applicants to the Ph.D. program should have a M.S. degree in geology or a related discipline; however, applicants with exceptional credentials may be admitted directly into the Ph.D. program. In the DGS, students who want to continue in the Ph.D. program after completing the M.S. degree must apply through the Graduate School website (<http://graduate.ua.edu/>) to the Ph.D. program. In rare circumstances, the student can apply to a Ph.D. prior to earning the M.S. degree if recommended by their Thesis Advisor. All course credits earned as a M.S. student, with the exception of thesis and non-thesis research credits, will apply to the Ph.D. degree if approved by the student's Dissertation Advisory Committee.

For admission to the DGS graduate program, students are required to have taken Physics I, Chemistry I and Calculus I. In addition, they must have taken at least one of the following courses: Physics II, Chemistry II or Calculus II.

Applicants to the M.S. and Ph.D. programs may be required by the Graduate Program Committee to complete one or more of the core courses in Geology (e.g., Mineralogy, Igneous-Metamorphic Petrology, Structural Geology, Stratigraphy and Sedimentology, and/or Field Geology or comparable field experience) if these classes are lacking in their background. These requirements cannot be fulfilled by audit and must be taken for a letter grade. In addition, DGS Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) must have a background in the course they are teaching. Deficiencies are determined by the Graduate Program Committee. To be a 100-level TA, the minimum classes needed are GEO 101 or GEO 102, Sedimentology and Stratigraphy, Mineralogy and one more of the following 7 classes: Geochemistry, Geophysics, Structural Geology, Volcanology, Hydrology, Igneous and Metamorphic Petrology, or Paleontology. These classes must be taken either for a letter grade or Pass/Fail but can never be audited.

Students may be admitted if they meet both of the following minimum requirements: (a) their GPA, based on a 4.0 system, is a minimum of 3.0 overall or 3.0 over the last 60 hours in a degree program (international grades are converted by the Graduate School to a 4.0 system), and (b) their GRE score is at least 300 (verbal plus quantitative sections) and the GRE score for analytical writing is \geq the 50th percentile. Under exceptional circumstances, an applicant may be considered for admission if they meet either the GPA requirement for regular admission (GPA of 3.0) or the entrance exam score requirement as outlined above. If such an applicant is admitted, they will need to obtain permission to continue in the program after the first 12 semester hours of graduate-level work have been completed. Permission to continue is earned by achieving a GPA of "B" or better (3.0) in the first 12 semester hours. If the 12 hours are completed in a term in which the total credits exceed 12, the evaluation is made on the basis of all graduate-level work completed at the end of that term of enrollment. Students admitted under this circumstance who do not meet the 3.0 requirement after their first 12 hours of graduate-level work will not receive permission to continue in their graduate program, and will be dropped from the program.

Non-native English speaking students are eligible for regular admission if they receive a score of at least 79 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam or 6.5 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam. Scores are valid for two years. Non-native English speakers must obtain a minimum of 24 on the TOEFL Speaking Subtest to be able to serve as a GTA (IELTS Speaking Band score of 7.5). In exceptional circumstances, a non-native English speaker may be permitted to teach with a Speaking Subtest score of 21 or more. This is subject to a placement test at the UA English Language Institute. In these circumstances (and in all cases where the TOEFL Speaking Subtest score is less than 28 or the IELTS Speaking band score is less than 8.5) a student must enroll in the International Teaching Assistant Program (ITAP) course while teaching and achieve at least a conditional pass to teach in a class without grading responsibilities. Students with a TOEFL Speaking Subtest

score of 20 or below (IELTS Speaking Band score of 6.5 or below) are not permitted to serve as a GTA until they have received at least a conditional pass in the ITAP course. Students with a TOEFL score below 79 (or IELTS score below 6.5) may receive a Provisional Language Admission, but they must enroll full-time in the ELI Intensive English Program. Students admitted as a Provisional Language Admissions will not be allowed to take graduate courses until they (a) achieve a TOEFL of at least 79, or (b) complete at least level 4 of the ELI Intensive English Program with a minimum GPA of 3.5.

3. REGISTRATION, COURSE LOAD, AND ADVISING

All students receiving full (0.5 FTE) assistantships, fellowships, or scholarships must be registered as full-time students for at least 6 hours of coursework (or the minimum as required). Most students in their first year register for 9 credits. All students utilizing the assistance of a faculty member or any facility of the UA in relation to a degree program must be registered for at least 1 hour of coursework or thesis/dissertation research credit. M.S. students must be registered for at least 1 credit hour during each semester of their candidacy. Ph.D. students must be registered for at least 3 credit hours of dissertation research during each semester after admission to candidacy, including the semester in which they defend their dissertation. The Graduate School must be consulted when a student is preparing to graduate to determine the hours needed for registration during the graduation semester as well as the deadlines for graduation.

Transfer of Credit

M.S. students may transfer up to 12 hours of graduate coursework from previous institutions. Ph.D. students may transfer up to 24 hours of graduate coursework either from previous institutions or credited from a previously earned graduate degree. Students with a U.S. M.S. degree can have up to 24 credits transferred once that degree is verified. Transfer credits will be allowed only on credit that was earned during the six-year period immediately preceding admission to the program. However, if the M.S. degree is older than 6 years and the student has been working continuously in his or her major field, then older classes may be eligible. The student must have earned an overall GPA of 3.0 at the institute where the credit was earned. Only classes with a grade of "B" or higher can be transferred. For transfer of credit from an M.S. program to your Ph.D., answer the question on the Plan of Study form and submit the form to the Graduate School.

Expiration of Courses

All requirements for the M.S. degree must be completed during six years after admission. Coursework older than six years is expired and must be re-taken.

All requirements for the Ph.D. degree must be completed within the seven-year period following admission to the doctoral program. Coursework older than seven years is expired.

Three year rule

After not enrolling in classes for three years, if a student wants to complete their degree, they must reapply to the DGS Graduate Program.

Student Activity Report

At the end of April, all graduate students will be required to submit a report to the DGS detailing their activities throughout the previous year. Activities include abstracts submitted, internships, papers published, conferences/workshops attended, field work and volunteer activities. A form will be provided each year for this report.

Internships

Some graduate students chose to complete an internship during their graduate tenure. You may receive credit for the internship during the semester that you are completing the internship, not after. For example, if you are completing a summer internship, you must pay summer tuition to get credit for that internship. M.S. students may complete a maximum of 3 credits of internship toward their degree. Ph.D. students may complete a maximum of 6 credits of internship toward their degree.

Leave of Absence

The DGS has no formal policy for a medical leave of absence. We try to accommodate a semester leave of absence if there is the need is documented by a medical professional. The Graduate Program Director will require that you inform the DGS by a certain date in the semester to determine if you are going to return to the department in the next semester. If a leave of absence is needed for professional development, the matter needs to be brought to the Graduate Program Committee for a vote.

Advising

Students are advised by their Faculty Advisor, with whom they have established a relationship prior to admission into the DGS. Students who do not have a Faculty Advisor are directed by the Department Chair or another faculty member appointed by the Chair until the student identifies a permanent research advisor. All students must meet with their Faculty Advisor or the Department Chair at least 1 week prior to registration each semester to discuss current coursework and courses to be taken the following semester. Students must enroll in the courses agreed upon with their Advisor. M.S. or Ph.D. students may choose to have two faculty members as Co-advisors. In this case, credit and responsibility for the student will be shared equally between the two Advisors.

Upon appointment of an Advisory Committee, students must have a meeting **each semester** with their Advisory Committee. Students not in residence must submit a written progress report each semester. Current and future research efforts will be reviewed to determine if satisfactory progress has been made toward completion of degree requirements. If the student has not followed the required timeline (see Appendix A and B), the student's research project will be terminated and the Advisory Committee will be disbanded. In the event of project termination, the student must propose an acceptable new research project and complete a thesis/dissertation prior to the end of the 6-year (M.S.) or 7-year (Ph.D.) candidacy period.

First Semester Class

All incoming graduate students are required to take "Communicating Geology" for 3 credits in the Fall (GEO 502 for M.S. students, GEO 602 for Ph.D. students). This class must be passed with at least a grade of C. If the class is not passed, it may be taken again once the next fall. Failure to pass this class for the 2nd time will result in revoking of any DGS funding. This class will focus on development of projects for research, proposal writing and presentation of research results.

Procedure for Changing Advisors

Graduate students must schedule a meeting with the Graduate Program Director if they want to change Advisors. A new Advisor must be identified. The Graduate Program Director will discuss procedures and inform the old advisor. If the student is funded as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), changing Advisors will result in the loss of funding. If the student is funded through a GTA and decides to switch Advisors, the GTA position will continue provided that a new research project has been chosen. If the switch happens after the proposal is successfully defended, a new proposal defense with a new committee for the new project must occur. The timeline will be determined by the advisor and the Graduate Program Director.

If the Advisor wants to end an Advisor/Advisee relationship with a Graduate Student, a committee consisting of the Graduate Program Committee and the student's Advisory Committee will be formed to evaluate the situation. Depending on the problem, results may range from changing of an Advisor to revoking of the student's departmental funding.

Procedure for Leaving the Program

GTA/GRA/fellowship student funding may be revoked if the program deadlines are not adhered to, poor academic performance, not adhering to the UA academic honor code, not fulfilling job duties as a GTA/GRA, inappropriate remarks or actions are made toward staff, faculty, other graduate students, or undergraduates, and if you become a danger to others. The Graduate Program Committee will address any problems or improper conduct with Graduate Students brought by the Chair, Supervisor of the GTA, Faculty Advisor or other Graduate Students. Faculty members are mandated reporters so if there is a Title IX violation, the report will be passed to the Title IX administrator. Otherwise, a meeting with the Advisor, Department Chair, Graduate Program Committee, and the student will be called to either determine if a solution to the problem or determine if funding will be revoked. Ph.D. students can only miss three milestones or extensions of milestones. Once three is reached, your departmental funding (GTA, GRA, fellowships) will be revoked with no chance of reinstatement. M.S. students can only miss two milestones or extensions of milestones. Once two is reached, your departmental funding will be revoked with no chance of reinstatement.

4. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students supported by the DGS may not engage in simultaneous employment elsewhere without permission of the Department Chair. Without permission, outside employment will result in employment termination in the DGS.

Terms of Appointment of Assistantships

The initial award of graduate assistantships is for 9 months (fall and spring semesters). However, if the student is appointed for the spring semester or the student is admitted without funding, the appointments are one semester. Subsequent reappointment is based on the academic and teaching/research performance of the student, curriculum-based research requirements, availability of funds and the initial offer letter. Initial award of an assistantship is not a guarantee of continued support. Poor performance in coursework, lack of progress toward degree requirements, or irresponsible behavior in the fulfillment of assistantship duties will result in your assistantship being revoked. Graduate assistants whose appointments are terminated by resignation or dismissal before the end of the academic term are personally responsible for the payment of all tuition and fees for that term.

All paperwork and the meeting of deadlines is the responsibility of the graduate student. Missing deadlines will result in delay and may result in your funding being revoked (see section 3).

A Graduate Student may earn the right to be considered for a GTA by taking deficient geology classes as determined by the Graduate Program Committee (see Admission and Retention section for minimum qualifications to be a 100-level GTA). At the request of the advisor or proposed future advisor, individual cases will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Committee. An example of an exception is prior excellence in the laboratory that the applicant wants to teach.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) and Responsibilities

GTAs are awarded by the DGS based on qualifications, experience, curriculum requirements, and availability of funding. UA regards a full-time GTA as 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) equal to 20 hours of work per week. Responsibilities of a GTA are assigned and supervised by the faculty member teaching the course or the Laboratory Supervisor and are subject to other teaching-related requirements by the faculty. GTAs may be asked to proctor or assist with field trips in other courses. GTA assignments are sent to the student via crimson email prior to the semester. New GTA's must attend a Graduate School GTA Orientation, Arts and Sciences Legal Training, and the DGS GTA Orientation. During registration week, students will work 20 hours on preparing teaching collections, lab handouts, teaching-lab facilities, and other work related to teaching appropriate lab sections. Students with GTA positions will attend weekly lab meetings. Missing these meetings will result in the loss of awarded assistantship unless the Lab Supervisor or head GTA has been consulted in advance and agrees with the absence. At the end of the semester, the GTAs meet with the faculty member supervising the lab to determine final grades. GTAs assist with final exam proctoring.

Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) and Responsibilities

GRAs are awarded and supervised by faculty members with research grants and are subject to conditions determined by the responsible faculty member. Research conducted using the GRA may or may not be related to the student's thesis/dissertation topic. A maximum of 20 hours of work per week can be assigned. The exact number and scheduling of hours is to be determined by agreement between the student and the faculty member. One week before registration, students must report to the faculty supervisor for duty assignments. GRAs must also attend the DGS orientation.

Fellowships

The DGS is sometimes able to award a fellowship/scholarship to highly qualified students. No specific duties are required of students receiving these fellowships/scholarships; however, the student is expected to utilize this opportunity to make significant progress toward the completion of the thesis/dissertation. These fellowships have minimum credit hours attached to them. All guidelines must be followed.

Graduate Council Fellowships, Graduate Council Research and Creative Activity Fellowships, and other classes of Graduate School fellowship are awarded by the Graduate School on a competitive basis. Candidates for these fellowships are nominated by the DGS. Graduate Council Research Fellowships are intended to support thesis/dissertation research in progress. Further information can be obtained in the Graduate School Catalog. Dean's Merit Scholarships are awarded by the College of Arts and Sciences. These are competitive and merit based for new

incoming graduate students. Students awarded this class of fellowship must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester. Recipients of fellowships are expected to use this opportunity to make significant progress on classwork and research, and are not permitted to accept other employment.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.S. DEGREE

The DGS provides GTA/GRA/fellowship for two years (4 semesters) for selected students if the student makes adequate academic progress. In rare cases, an additional semester of funding may be granted by the Graduate Program Committee if a GTA position is available, adequate progress is being made, and the Advisor provides assurances in writing to the Graduate Program Committee that the degree requirements will be completed during that semester.

Coursework

30 hours of course work is required for graduation with a M.S. degree: 24 hours of 400- to 600-level courses; 6 hours of GEO 599 (Thesis Research), graded pass-fail by the Thesis Advisor. Students are expected to present demonstrable evidence that they have performed thesis research to receive a passing grade. 2 hours of GEO 535:536 are required, which can only be taken in the 2nd year

One class is required – Communicating Geology (GEO 502) – in the first semester you start your degree.

No more than 6 hours of 400-level courses may be counted toward degree requirements, and these require prior approval by the Graduate School (form available from the Graduate School). Courses cross-listed at both the 400- and 500-level must be taken at the 500-level.

A maximum of 3 hours of GEO 598 (Non-Thesis Research) may count toward the 24-hour total.

At least 18 hours of the 24-hour total must be completed in the DGS. These may include transferred credits (see below). The 6 hours of remaining coursework may be taken in a related field with approval by the student's Thesis Advisory Committee.

A maximum of 12 hours of graduate courses may be transferred from other universities and applied toward the 24 hour total. These courses must be approved by the student's Thesis Advisor. See section 3 for Transfer of Credit procedures.

A GPA ≥ 3.0 is required for graduate courses, and at least 75% of these hours must be completed with grades of A or B. Classes in which a grade of D was earned do not count towards the 24 hours of required coursework.

A maximum of 20% of the student's required course credit may be taken on a pass/fail basis; 80% must be graded by letter. Taking a class Pass/Fail must be approved by the Thesis Advisor and the instructor of the course.

Undergraduate courses taken to meet deficiency requirements (see section 2) or as prerequisites for graduate courses do not count toward graduate degree requirements.

Graduate Seminar

All students must attend seminar. Seminar is required for the M.S. degree (GEO 535/536). M.S. students must take seminar two times during their **second year** in the graduate program, for a total of two credits, which count toward the 24 hours of course work required for the degree. M.S. students may substitute a conference oral presentation made at a national or international meeting for one of the two required seminar credits. If the paper is not accepted for an oral presentation, a poster presentation may be substituted. The faculty member in charge of the seminar and the student's advisor will determine if the conference is acceptable and will coordinate the logistics. Students must still enroll in seminar and attend seminar if they are substituting a conference presentation. If an exception is needed, a formal request to take the seminar in a different semester and a plan to fulfill the 1 year of seminar needed must be submitted to the Graduate Program Committee.

Thesis Advisory Committee

Most M.S. students are admitted with a Thesis Advisor. If not, the student must discuss possible thesis topics with several faculty members. The Chair, or a faculty member appointed by the Chair, will serve as the advisor until an appropriate advisor is found. The Thesis Advisor, who also serves as Chair of the Thesis Advisory Committee, must be a permanent member of the DGS Graduate Faculty.

Students choose the remaining members of their Thesis Advisory Committee in consultation with their Thesis Advisor during the first semester in residence. Students are responsible for asking the other members of the committee to serve on the committee and a form must be initialed. A DGS Thesis Advisory Committee consists of four members: the Thesis Advisor, two full-time or adjunct faculty members of the UA, and an external member, approved by the Thesis Advisor, who provides additional supervisory expertise. The external member can be from (a) another UA department, (b) another university, (c) the Geological Survey of Alabama, or (d) a geological corporation (e.g., an oil, mining, or environmental company). All members of the Thesis Advisory Committee must be Graduate Faculty members. The external committee member that is not a member of the UA Graduate Faculty must be approved by the Graduate School to act as a temporary member of the UA Graduate Faculty. This requires that a recent curriculum vita from the external member be provided to the Graduate School prior to the submittal of the committee form. If the external member does not have a Ph.D., evidence must be provided of their qualifications to serve on the committee. Normally, the Thesis Advisor will act as liaison between the Graduate School and external member to obtain Graduate Faculty status.

The student will schedule a meeting **each semester** of the Thesis Advisory Committee to review progress. No faculty member is obligated to serve on a particular Thesis Advisory Committee or act as a Thesis Advisor.

Thesis

Each candidate must write a thesis representing original work. No length or scope for the thesis is specified; however, the research problem should be designed to be completed in approximately one year. The exact timing of the progress and completion of a thesis is primarily the responsibility of the student. Satisfactory completion of a thesis is evidence that the student has employed research techniques consistent with those utilized by modern professional geoscientists in their field of specialization. The thesis may be written as a manuscript and formatted using the Graduate School's guidelines.

Thesis Proposal and Defense

When a research plan is defined, the student prepares a Thesis Proposal. This document includes a title page, a one-page summary of the thesis project, followed by associated objectives, methods, and an estimated timeline for work completion. The M.S. proposal is limited to a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages with 12-point font, including figures and references.

The Thesis Proposal Defense is due in the second semester. Students who are financially aided by the DGS (GTA, GRA, and/or industry fellowships) or by the UA (e.g., Graduate Council Fellowships) must defend the proposal during their second semester or they will not be eligible for continued financial support. Students not receiving support in the first two semesters, but seeking aid for subsequent semesters, will not be considered for support until a thesis is successfully proposed in the second semester.

For the Thesis Proposal Defense, the student should schedule a 3 hour time block. The student must distribute the Thesis Proposal to the Thesis Advisory Committee at least two weeks before the planned date of the Thesis Proposal Defense. All members of the Thesis Advisory Committee must certify that the proposal is ready for defense one week before the Defense can take place either by signature on the appropriate form or by email directly to the DGS administrative assistant responsible for the graduate program. The email from the committee member must state that the member has read the thesis and approves the proposal for defense.

The purpose of the Thesis Proposal Defense is to evaluate the thesis research project and to solicit guidance from the Thesis Advisory Committee regarding the research plan, objectives, and relevance of planned coursework. The defense will begin with a short (~25 minute) oral presentation of the Thesis Proposal that is open to the public. Following a short public question and discussion period, the audience is limited to the Thesis Advisory Committee and any other faculty members.

The outcome of the Proposal Defense is decided by majority vote of the Thesis Advisory Committee and attending faculty. Several possible outcomes are possible: (a) A *Full Pass* entitles the student to proceed with the proposed research with no substantial modification of the research goals, objectives, or planned coursework. However, the Committee may request edits to the proposal. (b) A *Conditional Pass* entitles the student to proceed with the proposed research under conditions stipulated by the committee. These may include, but are not limited to, specification of coursework, modification of the research plan, or modification of the research objectives. All changes to the research plan and objectives must be included in a revised Thesis Proposal. (c) A *Fail* requires the student to repeat the Proposal Defense after substantial modifications to the research plan

and/or objectives. The defense can only be repeated once. If failed again, the student is dismissed from the DGS Graduate Program.

The Thesis Proposal is not approved until after a successful Thesis Proposal Defense. After the Thesis Proposal Defense, the student must provide an electronic copy of the approved proposal to each member of the Thesis Advisory Committee. Additionally, the DGS must receive a paper copy and a PDF-formatted electronic copy of the approved proposal.

Thesis Preparation and Review

Prepare the thesis with two sets of guidelines: 1) Graduate School's "A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations"; 2) format of the journal to which the manuscript will be submitted.

The student will submit drafts of the thesis to their Advisor, allowing several weeks revision time. The student and the Advisor will work together and go through several revisions. When it is approved by the Thesis Advisor, it is submitted to the other members of the Thesis Advisory Committee. Review by the Thesis Advisory Committee, and revisions by the student based on their suggestions, may take as much as four weeks. The Committee may require several rounds of revisions before a Thesis Defense can be scheduled. If a committee member takes longer than four weeks for a review, a formal complaint should be filed with the Department Chair or Graduate Program Director.

Comprehensive Exam (Thesis Defense)

When the Thesis Advisory Committee is satisfied with the thesis, a Thesis Defense is scheduled. All members of the Advisory Committee must sign the relevant form or email their consent directly to the DGS administrative assistant responsible for the graduate program before displaying the thesis in the DGS office. The email from the committee member must state that the member has read the thesis and approve the display of the thesis. The thesis must be formatted in the Graduate School thesis format and displayed one week prior to the defense to allow reading and revision by the remainder of the faculty. Faculty members have the right and responsibility to comment and provide feedback if the thesis is deficient. When approved for display, the Graduate School must be notified of the time and location of the Thesis Defense. In accordance with the Graduate School rules, only the external member may use video conferencing to participate in the defense. If an internal member is not present on campus, the faculty member may use video conferencing to attend. All 4 members of the Thesis Advisory Committee must be present at the defense. Exceptions are rare but a compromise is determined with the Graduate Program Director in extenuating circumstances. If a member cannot be present in person or the external member cannot attend via teleconference, the student must replace that member, and the appropriate paperwork must be filed.

The Graduate School requires M.S. students to take a Comprehensive Exam on course material studied while a graduate student. The DGS includes this exam in the Thesis Defense. Questions cover a wider area of geology than the thesis but are generally relevant to the thesis subject. The student should schedule a 3 hour block of time. The exam will be administered by the student's Thesis Committee, and the exam is open to the public. A 30-40 minute presentation, emphasizing results and conclusions, is given by the student. The exam is then opened for questions from the audience, after which additional questions from the Thesis Committee, Department Faculty and Ph.D.-level Research Staff are given in closed session. All DGS faculty members that attend the exam and subsequent questioning session have the right to vote whether the student passes or fails. This vote is decided by majority and is recorded on a form (available from the Graduate School) that states the student has passed/failed the thesis defense. In the event of a tie, the Department Chair (or designated representative) casts the deciding vote. If not passed during the first attempt, the Thesis Defense may not be retaken.

Final Disposition of Thesis and Thesis Collections

The student must schedule an exit interview with the Department Chair before leaving the university.

The Committee Acceptance of the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation form indicating acceptance of the final PDF-formatted thesis must include original signatures of all members of the Thesis Advisory Committee. These signatures indicate that the committee has read the final PDF-formatted document and approved all changes in the manuscript and that the standards of the DGS are upheld.

The final PDF of the thesis, formatted following Graduate School specifications must be submitted online to the Graduate School. Deadlines are posted on the Graduate School website. In addition, students are required to provide the PDF thesis file to the DGS and the Advisory Committee.

Samples, data, computer programs, etc. used in thesis research are the property of the UA unless other arrangements are approved by the Thesis Advisor. As such, samples and copies of data and computer programs must be left with the DGS, and students should check with their Thesis Advisor before taking proprietary data out of the DGS upon graduation. It is the responsibility of the student to determine whether the Alabama Museum of Natural History (Office: 120 Smith) needs a collection of thesis samples. The Thesis Advisory Committee and the Museum will establish which materials (e.g., rocks, fossils, thin-sections, polished sections, rock powders, etc.) must be cataloged.

Deadlines/Milestones

The student must meet the Graduate School deadlines/milestones regarding the degree program based on the semester the student was admitted. Each semester, a notice of these deadlines is posted on the Graduate School’s website. It is not the responsibility of the Advisor, the Graduate Program Director, the Graduate Program Committee, or the Department Chair to insure that the student has filled out and submitted the proper paperwork to meet their deadlines. If the paperwork is filled out incorrectly or a deadline/milestone is missed, the result is a delay in the student’s graduation. If deadlines/milestones are not met, department funding for the student will be revoked unless granted an extension. To request an extension, a memo must be submitted to the Graduate Program Committee. The memo must contain a proposed timeline acceptable to all parties. M.S. students can only miss two milestones or extensions of milestones. Once two is reached, your departmental funding will be revoked with no chance of reinstatement.

Sequence and Approximate Time Frame for Completion of the M.S. Degree in Two Years:

1 st Semester	6-9 hrs. coursework	Select research topic and thesis advisor; Organize Thesis Advisory Committee
2 nd Semester	6-9 hrs. coursework	Write and Defend Thesis Proposal, Plan thesis work
3 rd Semester	6-9 hrs. coursework	Thesis research
4 th Semester	1-6 hrs. coursework or thesis research	Complete and defend thesis. The student must consult the Graduate School website for the deadline for completion of all degree requirements.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Ph.D. students are admitted to the DGS with a Dissertation Advisor already established. For students admitted to the Ph.D. program with funding, the DGS will provide a GTA/GRA for four years (8 semesters) if deadlines/milestones are met. Additional support past four years may be granted by the Graduate Program Committee if a GTA is available, adequate progress is being made, and the advisor provides assurances to the Graduate Program Committee that the degree is close to being completed.

Coursework

UA requirements for the Ph.D. degree are specified in the Graduate School Catalog. These requirements are: (a) a minimum of 48 hours of coursework beyond the baccalaureate degree; (b) successful completion of the preliminary and final examinations; and (c) a dissertation, including 24 credit hours of GEO 699 (Dissertation Research). DGS coursework requirements will be determined by the Dissertation Advisory Committee in consultation with the student.

72 credit hours are required for a Ph.D: 48 hours of 500-600 level courses and 24 hours of GEO 699. The 24 hours of GEO 699 (Dissertation Research) are graded pass/fail by the Dissertation Advisor. Students must present demonstrable evidence that they have performed dissertation research to receive a passing grade. These hours do not count toward the 48-hour coursework requirement. 4 the 48 credit hours must be GEO 635:636 in the 3rd and 4th years.

One class is required – Communicating Geology – taken in the first semester unless the same class has been completed at UA as a MS student.

A maximum of 12 hours of GEO 698 (Non-Dissertation Research) count toward the 48 hour total.

A maximum of 24 hours of graduate courses may be transferred from other universities and applied toward the 48 hour total. Transfer of credit occurs on the Plan of Study form, which should be submitted to the Graduate School in the first semester

An overall GPA \geq 3.0 is required for graduate courses, and at least 75% of these hours must be completed with grades of A or B. Classes in which a grade of D was earned do not count towards the 48 hours of required coursework.

A maximum of 20% of the student's required course credit may be taken on a pass/fail basis; 80% must be taken for a letter grade.

Undergraduate courses taken to meet deficiency requirements (see section 2) do not count toward graduate degree requirements.

Ph.D. candidates must enroll for at least 3 hours of Dissertation Research (GEO 699) each semester after Admission to Candidacy. If a student enrolls in GEO 699 before Admission to Candidacy, the condition of continuous enrollment still applies. The student must always enroll in GEO 699 for 3 credits in all subsequent semesters.

Graduate Seminar

All students must attend seminar. Seminar is required for the Ph.D. degree (GEO 635/636). Ph.D. students must take seminar four times during their **third and fourth years** in the graduate program, for a total of four credit hours, which count toward the 48 hours of course work required for the degree. Ph.D. students may substitute a conference oral presentation made at a national or international meeting for one of the four required seminar credits. If the paper is not accepted for an oral presentation, a poster presentation may be substituted. The faculty member in charge of the seminar and the student's advisor will determine if the conference is acceptable and will coordinate the logistics. Students must still enroll in seminar and attend seminar if they are substituting a conference presentation. If an exception is needed, a formal request to take the seminar in a different semester and a plan to fulfill the 2 years of seminar needed must be submitted to the Graduate Program Committee.

Research Skills Assessment

The Research Skills Assessment (RSA) must take place within the student's first two semesters in residence. Two-hours are set aside to determine how the student approaches solving thought problems and to identify knowledge deficiencies. The meeting will be attended by the Graduate Program Committee plus the Advisor. This assessment should not be viewed as an exam but more an evaluation of where a student stands in their scientific development. The committee will approach this assessment with the main question "How do we help this student succeed?" Possible outcomes include: Pass/Identify deficiencies/Reduce to an M.S. degree/Fail. The outcomes are flexible and must be addressed individually. The results of the assessment will be provided by the committee and signed by the Graduate Program Director, Department Chair and the student. The results of this assessment includes requirements that must be met before the preliminary exam in the 5th semester, except in extenuating circumstances such as a particular class was not offered. This assessment will not be re-administered. A fail will result in termination of GTA/GRA funding.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

Ph.D. students are accepted with an Advisor already assigned. If the faculty member leaves UA after the student accepted, the Ph.D. student will initially be advised by the Department Chair. Under this circumstance, the student must identify an area of specialization and an Advisor in the first semester of residence.

Organization of the Dissertation Advisory Committee must occur during or before your 2nd semester of the Ph.D. program. The Dissertation Advisory Committee consists of 5 members, normally with doctoral degrees, at least one of whom is from outside the DGS. The Chair of the Committee is the Dissertation Advisor, who must be a full member of the DGS Graduate Faculty. At least three members of the Committee must be members of the DGS Graduate Faculty. The external member(s) can be from (a) another UA department, (b) another university, (c) the Geological Survey of Alabama, or (d) a geological corporation (e.g., an oil, mining, or environmental company). All members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee must be Graduate Faculty members. The external committee member whom is not on the UA Graduate Faculty must be approved by the Graduate School to act as a temporary member of the UA Graduate Faculty. This requires that a recent curriculum vita from the external member be provided to the Graduate School prior to submission of the committee form. If the external member does not have a

Ph.D., evidence must be provided of their qualifications to serve on the committee. The Dissertation Advisor will act as liaison between the Graduate School and external member to obtain Graduate Faculty status.

Students are required to meet **each semester** with their Dissertation Advisory Committee, at which time progress toward degree requirements will be evaluated. A student who is not making satisfactory progress will receive a letter from the Dissertation Advisory Committee advising how to remedy the matter or DGS funding may be revoked.

Dissertation Proposal and Defense

The Dissertation Proposal includes a title page followed by associated objectives, methods, and an estimated timeline for work completion. The title page should identify the student, the major field of specialization, the proposed title of the dissertation, all members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee, and, ultimately, the date of approval by the Dissertation Advisory Committee. The body of the proposal should state the research problem and its significance, provide a concise summary of related previous work, outline the proposed research methods, define the objectives of the research, and discuss the significance of the anticipated results. Proposed research should result in at least three publishable manuscripts, and the student must identify three associated projects that will compose the dissertation. The Dissertation Proposal must be no longer than 15 double-spaced pages with 12 point font, including figures. References are not included in the page count.

The Dissertation Proposal Defense must occur in the third semester. Students who receive DGS funding (GTA, GRA, and/or fellowships) or Graduate School fellowships, must defend the proposal during their 3rd semester or DGS will revoke their funding. Students not receiving support in the first three semesters, but seeking aid for subsequent semesters, will not be considered for support until a dissertation proposal is successfully defended.

The student must distribute the Dissertation Proposal to the Dissertation Advisory Committee at least four weeks before the planned date of the Dissertation Proposal Defense. All members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee must certify that the proposal is ready for defense two weeks before the defense can take place either by signature on the appropriate form or an by email directly to the DGS administrative assistant responsible for the graduate program. The email from the committee member must state that the member has read the proposal and approves it for defense.

The Dissertation Proposal Defense is scheduled by the student, in consultation with the Dissertation Advisor, on a weekday that accommodates the schedules of all 5 members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee. One member can be present via teleconferencing. If two members need to participate via teleconference, permission must be obtained by the Advisor or Graduate Program Director from the Dean of the Graduate School. The student must schedule a 3 hour block of time. The purpose of the Dissertation Proposal Defense is to describe plans for the dissertation research and to provide a means to evaluate the potential of the student to plan and carry out the research project. The defense includes an oral presentation of the Dissertation Proposal, focusing on the three projects for the dissertation research. The defense is administered by the Dissertation Advisory Committee, chaired by the Dissertation Advisor, is open to the public and is 30 minutes long. The open session is followed by a closed session of questioning by the Dissertation Advisory Committee, DGS faculty, and Ph.D.-level Research Staff.

The outcome of the Dissertation Proposal Defense is decided by majority vote of the Dissertation Advisory Committee and attending DGS faculty. Several possible outcomes are possible: (a) A *Full Pass* entitles the student to proceed with the proposed research with no substantial modification of the research goals, objectives, or planned coursework. However, the Committee may request the edits to the proposal. (b) A *Conditional Pass* entitles the student to proceed with the proposed research under conditions stipulated by the committee. These may include, but are not limited to, specification of coursework, modification of the research plan, or modification of the research objectives. All changes to the research plan and objectives must be included in a revised Dissertation Proposal. (c) A *Fail* requires the student to repeat the Proposal Defense after substantial modifications to the research plan and/or objectives. The defense can only be repeated once. If failed again, the student is dismissed from the DGS Graduate Program. Each of the three outcomes require an Action Plan agreed upon by the committee and implemented by the advisor that details a path forward for each student. This Action Plan lays out strengths, solutions for weaknesses, and expectations from the committee in the coming years. A timeline will be included for solving weaknesses identified.

After approval, copies of the Dissertation Proposal must be distributed to the Dissertation Advisory Committee. In addition, a paper copy and a PDF-formatted electronic copy must be given to the DGS administrative assistant assigned to the Graduate Program.

Preliminary Examination (1st Manuscript)

Ph.D. students will submit a draft of their first paper, approved by their Advisor, to their Dissertation Committee by the third month of the 5th semester in residence. For this to happen, the research must occur in the 3rd and 4th semesters, with writing of the manuscript prior to and during the 5th semester. Students must get the guidelines for the Preliminary Examination from their advisor. The manuscript must be submitted to the Dissertation Committee 3 weeks before the proposed Preliminary Examination date. All 5 committee members must attend. The date will be advertised to the faculty and any faculty that attends must have read the manuscript to be a voting member. In the Preliminary Examination, a conversation will develop about the manuscript and questions may arise to make sure the student understands concepts addressed in the paper. The review criteria of the paper will be provided to the student prior to the examination. The student will receive a Pass/Conditional Pass (need to meet stipulations set forth by the Committee)/Fail. The decision will be a majority vote by the committee and eligible voting faculty members. If necessary, this examination may be repeated in the following semester. Failure to pass will result in revoking of DGS financial support. All 5 committee members must sign a form that indicates that they have read the manuscript, participated in the examination meeting and either Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail the student. The student is responsible for obtaining these signatures.

Admission to Candidacy

Applications for Admission to Candidacy can be filed after successful defense of a Dissertation Proposal and completion of the Preliminary Examination. Acceptance of the application for candidacy by the Graduate School is determined by the removal of any conditions as stated upon admission to the graduate program, completion of all required coursework and the recommendation of the DGS. Students on academic probation cannot be admitted to candidacy. Students admitted to Ph.D. candidacy are eligible for award of a M.S. degree under Plan II as described in the Graduate Catalog. It is the student's responsibility to file for the degree. Students must follow-up with the Graduate School to be certain that award of the M.S. degree does not cause them to be inadvertently removed from the Ph.D. program. Ph.D. candidates must enroll for at least 3 hours of Dissertation Research (GEO 699) each fall and spring semester after admission to candidacy until graduation.

Dissertation

The Ph.D. dissertation reports the results of original research that make a significant contribution of knowledge to the geological sciences. The dissertation must demonstrate an ability to conduct independent research as well as skill in organization and presentation.

Dissertation Preparation and Review

The DGS requires the dissertation be at least 3 separate, first-author manuscripts with an introductory chapter and concluding chapter that ties the papers together. At least two of these manuscripts need to be submitted to a journal by the time of the defense. The committee realizes that in rare situations (for example, on research cruises) the chief scientist is granted first authorship no matter who writes the paper. The Graduate Program Committee will take this into account on an individual basis.

Prepare the dissertation using two sets of guidelines: 1) Graduate School's "A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations"; 2) format of a journal to which the paper was submitted.

Preferred Format for dissertation:

Overall Abstract with preliminary pages

Chapter 1: Overall Introduction for Dissertation for all 3 papers - this is the overall theme and problem and ties them all together (references)

Chapter 2: Paper 1, this includes all components of a submitted paper (abstract, intro, methods, data, results, interpretations, and conclusions, references)

Chapter 3: Paper 2: this includes all components of a submitted paper (abstract, intro, methods, data, results, interpretations, and conclusions, references)

Chapter 4: Paper 3: this includes all components of a submitted paper (abstract, intro, methods, data, results, interpretations, and conclusions, references)

Chapter 5: Conclusions for the entire dissertation (answer the questions set forth in Chapter 1).

Appendices

The student submits drafts of the dissertation to their Advisor. The student and the Advisor will work together and go through several revisions. When it is approved by the Advisor, the dissertation is submitted to the other members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee. Review by the Dissertation Advisory Committee and revisions by the student based on their suggestions may take as much as four weeks. The student must account for this revision time when thinking about a graduation date. The Committee may require several revision rounds before a Dissertation Defense can be scheduled. If a committee member takes longer than four weeks for a review, a formal complaint should be sent to the Department Chair or Graduate Program Director.

Dissertation Defense (Final Oral Exam)

When the Dissertation Advisory Committee is satisfied with the dissertation, a Dissertation Defense is scheduled. All five members of the Advisory Committee must sign the relevant form or email their consent directly to the DGS administrative assistant responsible for the graduate program before displaying the dissertation in the DGS office. The email from the committee member must state that the member has read the dissertation and approves the display of the dissertation in the DGS department. The dissertation must be formatted in the Graduate School dissertation format and displayed two weeks prior to the Defense to allow reading and revision by the remainder of the faculty. Faculty members have the right and responsibility to comment and provide feedback if the dissertation is deficient. When approved for display, the Graduate School must be notified of the time and location of the Dissertation Defense. It is the responsibility of the Advisor and the student to schedule the Defense so all five members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee can attend. In accordance with the Graduate School rules, only the external member may use teleconferencing to participate in the defense. If two members need to participate via teleconference, permission must be obtained by the Advisor or Graduate Program Director from the Dean of the Graduate School. All 5 members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee must be present at the defense. Exceptions are rare but a compromise is determined with the Graduate Program Director in extenuating circumstances. If a member cannot be present in person or the external member cannot attend via teleconference, the student must replace that member, and the appropriate paperwork must be filed.

The Graduate School requires Ph.D. students to take a Final Oral Exam. The DGS includes this exam in the oral Dissertation Defense. Questions may cover a wider area of geology than the dissertation, but are generally relevant to the dissertation subject. The exam will be administered by the student's Advisory Committee, and the exam is open to the public. A no more than 45 minute presentation, emphasizing results and conclusions, is given by the student. The exam is then opened for questions from the audience, after which additional questions from the Dissertation Committee, DGS Faculty, and Ph.D.-level Research Staff are given in closed session. All DGS faculty members that attend the exam and subsequent questioning session have the right to vote whether the student passes or fails. This vote is decided by majority and recorded in a form that states the student has passed/failed the Dissertation Defense. The Dissertation Defense can only occur once and cannot be repeated if failed.

Final Disposition of Dissertation and Dissertation Collections

Students must schedule an exit interview with the Department Chair before leaving the university.

The final PDF-format dissertation Approval of Electronic Dissertation form must have original signature from all members of the Thesis Advisory Committee. These signatures indicate that the committee has read the final PDF-formatted document and approved all changes in the manuscript and that standards of the DGS are upheld.

The final PDF of the dissertation, formatted following Graduate School specifications must be submitted online via ProQuest to the Graduate School. Deadlines are posted on the Graduate School website. In addition, students are required to provide a PDF dissertation file to the DGS and the Advisory Committee.

Samples, data, computer programs, etc. used in thesis research are the property of the UA unless other arrangements are approved by the Dissertation Advisor. As such, samples and copies of data and computer programs must be left with the DGS, and students should check with their Dissertation Advisor before taking proprietary data out of the DGS upon graduation. It is the responsibility of the student to determine whether the Alabama Museum of Natural History (Office: 120 Smith) wants a collection of Dissertation samples. The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the Museum will establish which materials (e.g., rocks, fossils, thin-sections, polished sections, rock powders, etc.) must be cataloged.

Deadlines/Milestones

Students must meet the Graduate School deadlines/milestones regarding the degree program based on the semester the student was admitted. Each semester, a notice of these deadlines is posted on the Graduate School's website (<http://graduate.ua.edu/>). It is not the responsibility of the Advisor, the Graduate Program Director, the Graduate Program Committee, or the Department Chair to ensure that the student has filled out the proper paperwork and submitted the paperwork to meet their deadlines. If the paperwork is filled out incorrectly or a deadline/milestone is missing, the result is a delay in the graduation of the student. If deadlines are not met, funding for the student will be revoked unless granted an extension. To request an extension, a memo must be submitted to the Graduate Program Committee. The memo must contain a proposed timeline acceptable to all parties. Ph.D. students can only miss three milestones or extensions of milestones. Once three is reached, your departmental funding (GTA, GRA, fellowships) will be revoked with no chance of reinstatement.

Sequence and Approximate Time Frame for Completion of the Ph.D. Degree in Four Years:

1 st Semester	6-9 hrs. coursework	Meet with Dissertation Advisor, plan dissertation research, Plan/Schedule Research Skills Assessment
2 nd Semester	6-9 hrs. coursework	Organize Dissertation Committee; Dissertation Research; Research Skills Assessment (at latest)
3 rd Semester	6-9 hrs. coursework	Dissertation Proposal Defense
4 th Semester	0-9 hrs. coursework	Dissertation Research, preparation of paper 1
5 th Semester	0-9 hrs. coursework	Preliminary Examination, Admission to Candidacy, submission of paper 1, preparation of paper 2
6 th Semester	3-9 hrs. coursework	Dissertation Research, submission of paper 2, preparation of paper 3
7 th Semester	3-9 hrs. coursework	Dissertation Research, submission of paper 3
8 th Semester	3 hrs. dissertation research	Dissertation Defense

7. MISCELLANEOUS

Student Office Space

Space permitting, each graduate student will be assigned a desk in the Lameroux-Joiner Graduate Student Lounge or the laboratory of the Advisor. Desks are assigned in the following manner:

- a) Teaching Assistants, by seniority.
- b) Research Assistants and Fellows, by seniority.
- c) Unsupported M.S. students in the first four semesters in residence or unsupported doctoral students in the first eight semesters in residence, by seniority.
- d) Unsupported M.S. students in the fifth semester or more of residence or Ph.D. students in the ninth semester or more of residence, by reverse seniority.
- e) In event of a tie, Ph.D. students have precedence over M.S. students.

Equipment

Graduate students, as part of their class work and thesis/dissertation research, have access to labs. If equipment breaks, behaves in an unexpected fashion, or requires maintenance or supplies, the student must inform the proper faculty-staff member immediately. Students must not use a piece of equipment until they have been approved by a faculty or staff member familiar with its operation. UA requires training certification on some pieces of equipment. Failure to comply with this guideline will result in suspension of user privileges.

Keys

Keys for labs in Smith Hall and Bevill Building can be obtained from the DGS office and must be returned promptly when no longer needed. Each key is coded specifically to a name; therefore, keys must not be loaned or traded. Keys are issued on an as needed basis, and all labs must be kept locked when not in use. If keys are misused or facility security is not maintained, access to facilities may be revoked by the Department Chair and keys issued to students must be returned.

Always close and lock the doors in teaching and research laboratories.

Appendix A

Checklist for M.S. Students in the Department of Geological Sciences

Final deadlines imposed by the Graduate School are published on the Graduate School website prior to the beginning of each semester. Forms required by the Graduate School are available from the website and from the DGS secretary. This is provided as a guideline only.

Task	Form/Memo Required?	Target Date or Deadline
Advisor meeting to determine deficiency requirements	N	Before first day of classes
Complete Communicating Geology class	N	1 st semester
Transfer graduate credit (if applicable)	Y*	1 st semester
Appoint thesis committee	Y*	1 st semester
Distribute thesis proposal to committee	N	2 nd semester, at least 2 weeks prior to proposal defense
Prepare thesis proposal approval form	Y	Signed 1 week before proposal defense
Defend thesis proposal; file Master's Comprehensive Examination Form	Y*	By end of 2 nd semester
File one paper copy and a PDF-formatted copy of the thesis proposal with DGS	N	By end of 2 nd semester
Take GEO 535/536	N	3 rd and 4 th semesters (2 credit hours total)
Submit application for degree	Y**	Before classes begin in the semester that the degree is to be completed (through myBama)
Distribute thesis to advisory committee	N	AT LEAST 1 month prior to defense
Advisory committee approval for defense and display	Y	At least one week prior to thesis defense
Schedule defense with the thesis committee/department	Y*	At least one week prior to thesis defense
Schedule room for thesis defense	N	At least one week prior to thesis defense
Put thesis on display in DGS office	N	At least one week prior to thesis defense
Thesis defense form	Y*	Day of defense
Submit required samples, data and program archives to the Natural History Museum and Advisor	N	Prior to submitting thesis to Graduate School
Get committee acceptance form for electronic thesis signed	Y**	Prior to submitting thesis to Graduate School
Submit PDF thesis to the Graduate School	Y**	After committee acceptance form is signed
Submit a PDF copy to DGS and the advisory committee.	N	Immediately after Graduate School approves thesis
Schedule exit interview with Department Chair	N	Before leaving UA

*Graduate School Form to be completed on paper (online if available)

**Graduate School Form to be completed online

Summary of Course Requirements:

6 hours of GEO 599

24 hours of 400-600 level courses

- 2 hours of GEO 535:536
- 3 hours of Communicating Geology
- no more than 3 hours of GEO 598
- no more than 6 hours from outside the Geological Sciences discipline
- no more than 12 hours from outside the DGS (including transfer credit)
- no more than 6 hours of 400-level courses may counted (with prior approval by the Graduate School)

Appendix B
Checklist for Ph.D. Students in the Department of Geological Sciences

The final deadlines imposed by the Graduate School are published on the Graduate School website prior to the beginning of each semester. Forms required by the Graduate School are available from the website and from the department secretary. This is provided as a guideline only.

Task	Form Required?	Target Date or Deadline
Meet with Advisor to determine deficiency requirements	N	1 st semester
Research Skills Assessment (RSA)	Y	Within the 1 st and/or 2 nd semester. Memo signed by Graduate Program Director and student after results of assessment are sent
Complete Communicating Geology class	N	1 st semester
Appoint Dissertation Advisory Committee	Y*	1 st semester
Plan of Study form includes transfer of M.S. credit	Y*	1 st semester (hold placed on registration if not completed before 30 semester hours are taken)
Distribute Dissertation Proposal to Advisory Committee	N	3 rd semester and at least 2 weeks prior to proposal defense
Prepare Dissertation Proposal approval form for defense	Y	3 rd semester and at least 2 weeks prior to proposal defense
Dissertation Proposal Defense	Y*	By end of 3 rd semester, result in Action Plan
File one paper copy and a PDF-formatted copy of the Dissertation Proposal with DGS	N	After successful proposal defense
Required Check to see of all requirements from the Research Skills Assessment were fulfilled	Email	email addressed to Graduate Program Committee detailing how the requirements were fulfilled.
Take GEO 635/636	N	5 th -8 th semesters (4 credit hours, 1 per semester)
Approval of Preliminary Exam	Y	Signatures needed 3 weeks prior to exam
Preliminary Examination (1 st Manuscript)	Y*	During 5 th semester
File Admission to Candidacy application	Y*	After completing Proposal Defense & Preliminary Examination
Submit application for degree	Y**	Before classes begin in the semester that the degree is to be completed (through myBama)
Distribute dissertation to Dissertation Advisory Committee	N	AT LEAST 1 month prior to Dissertation Defense
Advisory committee approval for defense and display	Y	Two weeks prior to Dissertation Defense
Schedule defense with the Dissertation Committee/department	N	Two weeks prior to Dissertation Defense
Schedule room for Dissertation Defense	N	Two weeks prior to Dissertation Defense
Put dissertation on display in DGS office	N	Two weeks prior to Dissertation Defense
Dissertation Defense Form (Final Oral Exam)	Y*	Day of dissertation Defense
Submit required samples, data and program archives to the Natural History Museum and Advisor	N	Prior to submitting dissertation to Graduate School
Get committee acceptance form for electronic dissertation signed	Y**	Prior to submitting dissertation to Graduate School
Submit PDF Dissertation to the Graduate School	Y**	After Committee signs Dissertation acceptance form
Submit a PDF copy to DGS and advisory committee.	N	Immediately after Graduate School approves dissertation
Schedule exit interview with Department Chair	N	Before leaving UA

*Graduate School Form to be completed on paper (online if available)

**Graduate School Form to be completed online

Summary of Course Requirements:

24 hours of GEO 699; 48 hours of 500-600 level courses

- 4 hours of GEO 635:636
- no more than 12 of GEO 698 or GEO 598
- no more than 24 from outside the Geological Sciences discipline
- no more than 24 from outside the DGS (including transfer credit)