



**School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment  
Geology and Geophysics**

**Graduate Studies Handbook**

**Requirements – Policies – Procedures**

FALL 2021

**Graduate Studies Program**

**School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment**

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**[https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/earth\\_ocean\\_and\\_environment/myseoe/grad-handbooks.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/earth_ocean_and_environment/myseoe/grad-handbooks.php)**

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## 1. Introduction

Geology and geophysics encompass the entire spectrum of the study of our planet including but not limited to the geological and biological materials of which the Earth is made; the physical forces that act on the solid Earth, rivers, lakes and oceans; the history of the planet; and its past, present and future environments. The mission of the Geology and Geophysics program within the School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment of the University of South Carolina is to develop, communicate, apply and promote the geological sciences through teaching, research, and service to the University, the State and the Nation.

The school expects all graduate students to gain an understanding of the fundamental principles and practices related to the primary areas of geology and geophysics. A specific Program of Study is created for each student in accordance with the requirements that are described in this manual. All students are required to satisfy a graduate breadth course requirement.

The material presented herein is a summary of the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and Master of Science (M.S.) degrees in Geological Sciences, earned through the UofSC School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment. These requirements are in addition to those of the UofSC Graduate School. All students should review the Graduate Studies Bulletin, which is the official manual of regulations and guidelines for graduate study at the UofSC. The most up-to-date version can be found at the School's home page ([www.gradschool.sc.edu](http://www.gradschool.sc.edu)). It is the responsibility of each student to become familiar with the University's policies and regulations.

For information not contained in this handbook or on the Graduate Programs webpage ([www.seoe.sc.edu/grad](http://www.seoe.sc.edu/grad)), students should contact the Graduate Studies Director, or the Graduate Studies Coordinator.

***The requirements described in this document apply to all graduate students who enroll in and begin the graduate program on or after August 15, 2019. It also applies to all students who began coursework before August 15, 2019 but who were re-instated or changed status on or after this date.***

## 2. Admission to the Graduate Program

Successful applicants to the graduate program in the School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment must have received a bachelor's or higher degree from an accredited college or university and meet admission requirements set by the UofSC Graduate School. Moreover, successful applicants are required to have a minimum verbal score of 146 with a minimum quantitative score of 144. Applicants should have acquired competence in one of the fields of basic science. However, more important than any fixed entrance requirements, the candidate's academic record and other credentials must indicate the potential to progress satisfactorily in graduate studies. Students that are typically accepted into Geology & Geophysics graduate program have an undergraduate GPA exceeding 3.0 and letters of recommendation that rank them in the upper 25% of their cohort. Deficiencies in prerequisite subjects must be made up before a student may proceed with graduate work. International students are required to adhere to additional requirements set by the Graduate School.

In some cases, admission to the program is conditional to specific terms. In the case of a conditional admission, the student is required to meet the conditions of admission as expressed in the letter of admission in a timely manner. Failure to do so will lead to termination from the program.

A graduate student who has been admitted to the Ph.D. program can transfer to the M.S. program through an application for a change of status submitted to the Graduate School after discussion with and approval of his/her advisor. This change of status does not guarantee additional support beyond that awarded through the original admission to the program.

Students who have been admitted to the M.S. program can petition the Graduate Studies Director for a change of status to the Ph.D. program prior to earning the M.S. degree. Such a request will be treated as a new admission and will be examined by the graduate studies committee. In such cases, new letters of reference may be requested to establish the ability of the student to carry out independent Ph.D. research. It is recommended that the student wait for a decision from the graduate studies committee prior to applying for a change of status in the Graduate School. If successful, this change of status does not guarantee additional support beyond that awarded through the original admission to the program.

### **3. Master of Science (M.S.) in Geological Sciences**

The Master of Science degree program prepares students for professional careers in industry and government, or for the pursuit of further graduate degrees in the fields of geology, geophysics, geochemistry, and marine science. A written thesis or peer-reviewed manuscript is required for students seeking an M.S. degree. Students in the M.S. program are expected to conduct original scientific research under the supervision of an advisor, and to have a basic understanding of the fundamental principles and practices related to their primary area of study.

The Program expects all graduates to possess effective oral and written communication skills.

Upon admission, M.S. students must make satisfactory progress toward the award of the degree, including:

- (1) selection of a Thesis Advisor from the faculty of the Geology and Geophysics program within the SEOE (1st semester)
- (2) formation of a Thesis Committee (1st year).
- (3) submission of a M.S. Program of Study (1st year).
- (4) Thesis Proposal Presentation & Comprehensive Exam (1st year).
- (5) Thesis Defense (2nd year).
- (6) Enrollment in GEOL 800 (seminar) each semester

It is expected that a full-time student will obtain a M.S. degree within two years of beginning course work.

#### **3.1 Selection of M.S. Thesis Advisor**

Master of Science students are typically admitted with a thesis advisor. If no advisor has been assigned, the student is admitted with the Graduate Director as the temporary thesis advisor. Within the first semester, the student must select an advisor who except in extenuating circumstances must be a member of the faculty of the Geology and Geophysics program. In the case of an external thesis advisor, a thesis co-advisor from within the Geology and Geophysics program must also be assigned.

Meeting all degree requirements is the student's responsibility. The thesis advisor, in consultation with the other committee members, will direct the student's efforts towards a successful completion of research goals and provide advice on course selection and other academic matters. The thesis advisor will also assist the student in selecting the other thesis committee members.

#### **3.2 M.S. Thesis Committee**

The student in consultation with his/her advisor must create a Thesis Committee. The Committee will consist of at least three members (including the advisor). At least two of the members (including the advisor) must be faculty of the Geology and Geophysics program. The Thesis Committee sets the Program of Study for the student, advises, and approves the Thesis Proposal / Comprehensive Exam and Thesis Defense.

Approved members from outside the University of South Carolina can participate as members of the Thesis Committee, but they must have earned a Ph.D., and agree to participate in all committee meetings. The program provides no funding to Thesis Committee members for travel expenses related to participation in committee meetings. Participation via videoconference is acceptable for cases when a committee member cannot participate on site. Securing such video-conferencing facilities is the responsibility of the student and his/her advisor.

It is strongly recommended that the student work closely with and schedule regular meetings with all committee members during his/her course of study.

### 3.3 M.S. Program of Study

Each M.S. candidate, in consultation with the Thesis Committee (usually during or prior to the Thesis Proposal Presentation, see Section 3.4), must prepare a Program of Study. This outlines his/her entire program of courses and should be submitted no later than the end of the second semester, after entrance into the program. The courses listed in the Program of Study must adhere to requirements listed in Section 3.3.1 and should be submitted on the appropriate form ([https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/forms\\_library/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/forms_library/index.php)). The Graduate Studies Director and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve this form.

Courses in the Program of Study represent the minimum hours and should not be interpreted as an upper limit. The Program of Study is determined by the Thesis Committee based on individual student needs and may include additional coursework beyond the 30 minimum credit hours (see Section 3.3.1) if the committee judges that it is necessary for the student's success.

#### 3.3.1 Course Requirements

For the Master of Science degree, the minimum course requirements include 30 semester hours of work, where half the credits are in courses numbered 700 and above (excluding 799)

An average grade of B (GPA of 3.00) or higher is required for all courses taken in the Program of Study. Any grade C+ or lower is considered a requirement failure. In addition, the student must achieve a B average (GPA of 3.00) or higher on all courses taken for graduate credit including courses that are not part of the degree program, and must not accumulate more than 11 credits with grades of C+ or lower. For calculating a projected GPA, please use the form published on the Registrar's website ([http://registrar.sc.edu/html/gpa\\_calc/gpa.htm](http://registrar.sc.edu/html/gpa_calc/gpa.htm)).

The table below depicts the number and type of credit hours required to create a typical Program of Study for a M.S. degree as well as the conditions that need to be met.

#### MSc Degree Requirements: (30 hours minimum).

- (A) GEOL 799 (Thesis Preparation): 1-9.
- (B) GEOL 790: Variable.
- (C) GEOL 800 (Seminar): Maximum of 4 credit hours on the POS.
- (D) Graduate Courses (500+ level) minimum: 3 Breadth\* + 1 other course (excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899).
- (E) Total credit hours in POS: 30
- (F) At least half of the credit requirements in courses numbered 700 or above.

Courses	MSc credit hours for POS
(A) GEOL 799	1 to 9
(B) GEOL 790	0 to 9
(C) GEOL 800	0 to 4

(D)	<b>Minimum number</b> of Graduate Level Courses @500+ level: 3 Breadth courses* +1, excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.	12
(E)	Condition 1: Total credit hours = 30	
(F)	Condition 2: Half the credits in 700+ courses (excluding 799)	

\*see 4.4.2.

Examples of possible POS for MS Student

Courses		Example POS 1	Example POS 2
(A)	GEOL 799	8	8
(B)	GEOL 790	6	3
(C)	GEOL 800	4	4
(D)	<b>Minimum number</b> of Graduate Level Courses @500+ level: 3 Breadth courses* +1, excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.	12	15
(E)	Condition 1: Total credit hours = 30	yes	yes
(F)	Condition 2: Half the credits in 700+ courses (excluding 799)	yes	yes

A number of graduate level courses available through other departments and colleges may be counted toward the M.S. degree in Geological Sciences.

### 3.3.2 Course Breadth Requirement

All M.S. students must complete three breadth courses from distinct breadth categories. A list of courses that satisfy these categories can be found on the SEOE website:

[https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/earth\\_ocean\\_and\\_environment/myseoe/grad-handbooks.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/earth_ocean_and_environment/myseoe/grad-handbooks.php). Courses outside the SEOE, including those taken at other universities, cannot be substituted for this requirement.

### 3.3.3 Seminar Attendance Requirement

All M.S. students must register for GEOL 800 each semester until they graduate and attend a minimum of 75% of the weekly seminars to remain in good standing. For exceptional circumstances, students may petition for an exemption to the Graduate Studies Director. Students who are not registered for GEOL 800, and have not obtained permission from the Graduate Studies Director will be considered not in good standing, and may thus be ineligible for funding from the SEOE or other sources.

### 3.3.4 Seminar Presentation Requirement

Each M.S. candidate must present an on-campus public seminar on her/his research progress at least once per year. A student on a normal timetable can satisfy this requirement by delivering a Thesis Proposal Presentation (see Section 3.4) in one's first year and a Thesis Defense (see Section 3.5) in one's second year.

### 3.3.5 Transfer of Graduate Credit

Graduate credits that are not part of a completed degree or certificate program at UofSC or another institution may be transferred subject to the following restrictions:

- (1) No more than 12 credit hours may be transferred.
- (2) The credits must be relevant to the M.S. program and approved by the Thesis Committee

- (3) The credits must be from an accredited institution recognized by UofSC; carry graduate credit with a grade of B or higher; and have been earned within a four year period prior to the beginning of the M.S. program.
- (4) The credit transfer is approved by the Graduate Studies Director.

Applications for credit transfer should be made by the student to the Graduate Studies Director. The application should include an affidavit stating that all of the restrictions listed above have been met and must be signed by all members of the Thesis Committee.

A maximum of nine graduate credit hours that are part of a completed degree or certificate program at UofSC or another accredited and recognized institution may be applied toward the M.S. degree requirements.

### **3.4 M.S. Thesis Proposal Presentation / Comprehensive Exam**

Once a student has selected a Thesis Advisor, formed a Thesis Committee, and identified a thesis topic, he/she must complete his/her Thesis Proposal Presentation / Comprehensive Exam on an arranged date. The Thesis Proposal Presentation / Comprehensive Exam involves the student presenting the proposal in an oral seminar to the public and to the Thesis Committee, followed by questions from the public and Thesis Committee in areas broadly related to the research to be conducted. The Thesis Committee then determines whether the student is qualified to carry out the proposed work and whether the proposed project is a viable research topic.

A written Thesis Proposal must be submitted to the student's Thesis Committee. The final version must be submitted at least one week prior to the Thesis Proposal Presentation / Comprehensive Exam.

An announcement of the presentation must be filed with the Graduate Studies Office at least one week in advance by submission of an abstract with the date, time and place of the defense. This information will be distributed by the Graduate Studies Office to all faculty and students and posted on the SEOE's web site.

The Thesis Proposal Presentation / Comprehensive Exam consists of:

- (1) A technical research presentation of the Thesis project for the Thesis Committee. This presentation is open to the public. Normally, the presentation is followed by questions from the public at the discretion of the committee chair.
- (2) Following the public questioning, a private discussion with the Thesis Committee takes place, in which the candidate is examined on questions broadly related to the project, and the candidate's Program of Study is discussed. The Committee will determine whether the student is qualified to carry out the proposed research and whether the proposed project is viable. If the Committee decides that the proposal is not viable, or that the student is ill-prepared, then alternative plans should be discussed with the student and a new proposal should be presented to the committee within 90 days of the first Thesis Proposal Presentation. If the committee rejects the second proposal, then the student will be terminated from the M.S. program.

The Thesis Proposal Presentation should be completed by the end of the first year. A copy of the approved proposal must be filed with the Graduate Studies Office using the appropriate form within one week of the date of the presentation (see [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/earth\\_ocean\\_and\\_environment/myseoe/grad\\_frequently\\_used.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/earth_ocean_and_environment/myseoe/grad_frequently_used.php)). This form must be accompanied by the appropriate program assessment forms, which are submitted by the Thesis Advisor or another faculty member of the student's Thesis Committee (see Section 6).

### **3.5 M.S. Thesis Defense**



The M.S. Thesis Defense consists of a public seminar, public question and answer period, and a private consultation / examination with the Thesis Committee. It must take place no earlier than sixty (60) days after a successful M.S. Thesis Proposal Presentation. The announcement of this defense must be filed with the Graduate Studies Office at least one week in advance by submission of an abstract with the date, time and place of the defense. This information will be distributed by the Graduate Studies Office to all faculty and students and posted on the SEOE's web site. Students must be registered for at least one semester hour of graduate credit during the term in which the Thesis is completed and approved.

A Program of Study (see Section 3.3) must be filed with the Graduate School before the Thesis Defense. The results of the Thesis Defense should be filed with the Graduate Studies Office within one week of the defense date using the appropriate form (see Appendices). This form must be accompanied by the appropriate program forms, which are submitted by the Thesis Advisor or another faculty member of the student's Thesis Committee (see Section 6). If the student fails the Thesis Defense, he/she is required to repeat it within 120 days. Failure to do so or a second failure leads to disqualification of the student from the M.S. program.

### **3.6 M.S. Thesis Submission**

The UofSC Graduate School publishes deadlines for the final submission of an approved. Students should consult the Graduate School and their web site ([www.gradschool.sc.edu](http://www.gradschool.sc.edu)) at least one semester before the Thesis is to be submitted regarding general Thesis regulations and deadlines.

The first draft of the M.S. Thesis must be in the hands of the thesis advisor and other committee members at least sixty (60) days before the deadline for final submission. Final copies of the Thesis are to be submitted to the thesis advisor and other committee members for their approval at least thirty (30) days prior to the submission deadline. The student should schedule an appointment with The Graduate School at least one week in advance of the deadline.

An electronic copy of the Thesis must be filed with the Graduate School. The Thesis should be formatted according to the requirements set by the Graduate School (see Dissertation Guidelines link at <http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/thesisdiss.asp>). In addition, an electronic copy must be provided to the Graduate Studies Office. The SEOE requires the names of the committee members and the Dean of the Graduate School be listed on the first page under their respective signature.

### **3.7 Accelerated M.S. Degree**

An accelerated schedule enables an enrolled UofSC student to complete the requirements for both B.S. and M.S. degrees in Geological Sciences in 5 years (10 semesters). This schedule allows the student to take a combination of undergraduate- and graduate-level coursework in the fourth year of his/her undergraduate study. Additional course and Thesis work is completed in the 5<sup>th</sup> year so that the student obtains the 30 hours of graduate-level coursework required for the M.S. degree.

Students interested in the accelerated M.S. degree must fulfill all requirements indicated in Sections 3.1 to 3.6. In addition, accelerated M.S. students are allowed to use up to 12 credit hours of graduate work (500 level and above) towards both undergraduate and graduate degrees. In some instances, this may require students to enroll in classes at the 700 level or above via Senior Privilege permission (6 credit maximum). In order to pursue the accelerated M.S. degree, the student's Program of Study and Thesis Committee must be established before the end of the fourth year of study.

### **3.8 Time Limits & Restrictions**

After admission to the M.S. program, students are expected to make satisfactory and timely progress toward the degree. If a break in studies occurs, the student's admission status expires following three years of non-enrollment. In this case, students wishing to continue must re-apply and fulfill the admission

requirements in effect at the time of re-application. Upon readmission, these students are subject to regulations in the current Graduate Studies Bulletin and Geology & Geophysics Graduate Program requirements. Students do not graduate within 6 years of their initial registration will be considered withdrawn from the M.S. program.

### **3.9 Progression from M.S. to Ph.D. Degree**

Students who wish to pursue a Ph.D. degree in Geological Sciences after completion of the M.S. degree must submit a formal application to the Graduate School. No M.S. student will be accepted into the Ph.D. program unless a faculty member agrees to serve as a Dissertation Advisor for that student.

## **4. Ph.D. in Geological Sciences**

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree program prepares students for professional careers and leadership positions in industry, government and academia in the fields of geology, geophysics, geochemistry, and marine science. Ph.D. students are expected to conduct independent, original scientific research and to have an understanding of the fundamental principles and practices related to the primary areas of the earth and/or ocean sciences. Training involves developing the ability to use appropriate laboratory and field equipment, and expanding one's understanding of scientific methodology, quantitative problem-solving skills and experimental or numerical techniques.

The Program expects all graduates to possess effective oral and written communication skills.

Upon admission to the Doctoral program, a Ph.D. student must ensure satisfactory progress towards the degree, including:

- (1) selection of a Dissertation Advisor from the faculty of the Geology and Geophysics program of the SEOE (1st semester)
- (2) formation of Ph.D. Doctoral Committee (1st year)
- (3) Dissertation Proposal Presentation / Qualifying Examination (by the end of 2nd year)
- (4) submission of Ph.D. Program of Study (2nd year)
- (5) acceptance of a peer-reviewed manuscript for publication (at least 60 days before Defense):
- (6) Comprehensive Examination (at least 60 days before Defense)
- (7) submission of a second manuscript to a peer-review journal (at least ~30 days before degree award)
- (8) Dissertation Defense (at least ~30 days before degree award)
- (9) Enrollment in GEOL 800 (seminar) each semester until graduation

Although a Ph.D. degree can be earned in three years, the expected time for graduation in the SEOE is four years, assuming satisfactory progress. There are several time limitations that, if not met, may lead to coursework expiration or termination from the program.

### **4.1 Selection of Ph.D. Dissertation Advisor**

The Dissertation Advisor must be a member of the faculty of the Geology and Geophysics program within the SEOE. In exceptional circumstances, faculty outside the program can be assigned as co-advisors.

Most Ph.D. students are admitted with a Dissertation Advisor already assigned, but in extraordinary circumstances a Ph.D. student may opt to choose her/his Dissertation Advisor by the end of her/his first semester. In such situations, the program Graduate Studies Committee will assure that the incoming student receives the necessary support.

The Dissertation Advisor, in consultation with the other advisory committee members, will direct the student's efforts towards successful completion of research goals and provide advice on course selections and other matters. The Dissertation Advisor will also assist the student in selecting other advisory committee members.

Students must remain officially active in the Ph.D. program by taking at least one credit hour during all semesters when advisement is conducted.

Meeting the degree requirements of the program is the student's responsibility.

## **4.2 Doctoral Committee**

The Graduate School requires that each Ph.D. student form three committees: a Ph.D. Dissertation Committee, a Comprehensive Exam Committee and a Dissertation Exam Committee. The Geology and Geophysics program of the SEOE requires that membership in each committee is the same (hereafter termed the Doctoral Committee), except in extraordinary circumstances.

Doctoral Committees consist of a minimum of four qualified individuals, including the Dissertation Advisor and one member from outside the Geology and Geophysics Program. The majority of the committee's membership must be tenure-track UofSC faculty, and a minimum of two members (including the Dissertation Advisor) must be tenured or tenure-track faculty in the Geology and Geophysics program of the SEOE.

Members from outside the University of South Carolina require the approval of the Graduate Director and the Graduate School. The selection of such members must be justified on academic grounds and the member must have expertise relevant to the research area of the project. Such members must have a Ph.D. and be actively involved in research, demonstrated through recent publications. Furthermore, committee members from outside of the university should be prepared to actively participate in the process of advisement and be present in the meetings and exams required by the program. No funding is provided by the program to cover expenses of outside members for travel to participate to committee meetings. Participation via videoconference is acceptable by the program for cases when a committee member cannot participate on site. Securing such videoconferencing facilities is the responsibility of the student and his/her advisor.

The committee must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School by submitting a Doctoral Committee Appointment Request form before it can recommend a Program of Study for a Ph.D. student. Changes in committee membership require the approval of the Graduate Studies Director, and the consent of the majority of the Doctoral Committee.

Students must remain officially active by enrolling in at least one UofSC credit hour during all semesters when advised by the Doctoral Committee. No formal Doctoral Committee meetings may be arranged if the student is officially inactive.

Students should organize regular meetings (annual or more often if needed) with their Doctoral Committee to present and discuss research goals, hypotheses and progress. The Doctoral Committee may request that the student prepare written progress reports beyond that associated with the Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal Presentation.

## **4.3 Residency Requirements**

All Ph.D. candidates must be in residence at an approved university for at least three academic years after the candidate has begun graduate work. At least one year of the three must be spent on the Columbia campus of the University of South Carolina. The year of residence on the Columbia campus after admission to the Doctoral program can be fulfilled by successful completion of at least 18 graduate credit hours within a span of three consecutive semesters (excluding summers). Enrollment in a summer term is not required to maintain continuity, but credits earned during summer terms will count towards residency.

## 4.4 Ph.D. Degree Requirements

Requirements for the Ph.D. degree include: (i) course requirements; (ii) course distribution requirements; (iii) seminar attendance; (iv) seminar presentations; and (v) at least one publication. Each category represents a minimum requirement and none of the requirements should be viewed as restrictive or exclusive of another requirement.

### 4.4.1 Course Requirements

All Ph.D. candidates must complete a minimum of sixty (60) graduate hours beyond the Bachelor's degree, or a minimum of thirty (30) graduate hours beyond the M.S. degree. At least one-half of credit requirements in courses numbered 700 or above.

With the help of their Doctoral Committee, Ph.D. students will choose the courses required to ensure adequate preparation for and execution of their research.

[NOTE: these requirements are for the Program of Study. Graduate Committees may require additional coursework toward completion of the degree].

All students must also satisfy the program course distribution requirement ("Breadth Requirement" see Section 4.4.2).

A grade of B (GPA of 3.00) or higher is required for all courses taken in the Program of Study. Any grade below B is considered a failure of the degree requirement. In addition, the student must achieve a B average (GPA of 3.00) or higher on all courses taken for graduate credit including courses that are not part of the degree program. The student must not accumulate more than 11 credits with a grade of C+ or below. A form for calculating projected GPA can be found at the Registrar's website ([http://registrar.sc.edu/html/gpa\\_calc/gpa.htm](http://registrar.sc.edu/html/gpa_calc/gpa.htm)).

The tables below show the number and type of credit hours required for a typical Program of Study for a PhD degree for a student without and with an MS degree.

#### **PhD-Post Bachelor's degree. 60 credit hours (minimum).**

The following conditions must be met:

- (A) GEOL 899 (Dissertation Preparation): Minimum 12, maximum 30 credit hours.
- (B) GEOL 800 (Seminar): Maximum of 6 credit hours on the POS.
- (C) Graduate Courses (500+ level) (minimum): 4 Breadth\* + 2 additional courses for 18 credit hours, excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.
- (D) GEOL 790: Variable.
- (E) Total credit hours in POS: 60
- (F) At least half of the credit requirements in courses numbered 700 or above.

	<b>PhD - Post Bachelor's (no MSc) credit hours</b>
(A) GEOL 899	12 to 30
(B) GEOL 800**	0 to 6
(C) <b>Minimum number</b> of Graduate Courses @500+ level: 4 Breadth courses* + 2 others (minimum) excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.	18 or more
(D) GEOL 790	as needed to complete POS
(E) Total credit hours (minimum)	60
(F) At least one-half of credit requirements in courses numbered 700 or above.	30 or more

\*see 4.4.2.

Examples of possible POS for PhD-Post Bachelor's with proposed courses.

	Example POS 1	Example POS 2	Example POS 3	Example POS 4
(A) GEOL 899	30	30	20	21
(B) GEOL 800 (maximum)	6	6	6	6
(C) Minimum number of Graduate Courses @500+ level: 4 Breadth courses* + 2 others (minimum) excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.	18	24	18	21
(D) GEOL 790	6	0	16	12
(E) Total credit hours (minimum)	YES	YES	YES	YES
(F) At least one-half of credit requirements in courses numbered 700 or above.	YES	YES	YES	YES

**PhD-Post Masters. 30 credit hours (minimum)**

- (A) GEOL 899 (Dissertation Preparation): Minimum 12, maximum 30 credit hours.
- (B) GEOL 800 (Seminar): Maximum of 6 credit hours on the POS.
- (C) Graduate Courses (500+ level) (**minimum**): 4 courses\* for 12 credit hours, excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.
- (D) GEOL 790: Variable.
- (E) Total credit hours in POS: 30
- (F) At least half of the credit requirements must be in courses numbered 700 or above.

	PhD - Post MSc credit hours
(A) GEOL 899	12
(B) GEOL 800 (maximum)	0 to 6
(C) <b>Minimum number</b> of Graduate Level Courses @500+ level: 4 courses* excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.	12 or more
(D) GEOL 790	as needed to complete POS
(E) Total credit hours (minimum)	30
(F) At least one-half of credit requirements in courses numbered 700 or above (excluding 899).	15 or more

\*If a student received their MS from UofSC, they need to take 1 more course from the Breadth\* course pool, and 3 other courses; If a student received their MS from another institution, they need to take the 4 courses from Breadth\* course pool. (\*see 4.4.2.)

Examples of possible POS for PhD-Post Bachelor's.

	Example POS 1	Example POS 2
(A) GEOL 899	15	12
(B) GEOL 800 (maximum)	6	6
(C) <b>Minimum number</b> of Graduate Level Courses @500+ level: 4 courses, excluding GEOL 790, 800, 899.	12	12
(D) GEOL 790	3	0
Condition 1: Total credit hours = 30	YES	YES

Condition 2: At least one-half of credit requirements in courses numbered 700 or above, (excluding 899).	YES	YES
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A number of courses available through other departments and colleges may be counted as graduate credit toward a Geological Sciences Ph.D. degree.

#### 4.4.2 Course Breadth Requirement

All Ph.D. students must **complete at least one course in four of the six breadth categories** recognized by the program (Exception is if a student received their MS from UofSC and already took 3 Breadth courses, they only need to take 1 more course from the Breadth course pool to complete the 4 course requirement). *Due to the large number of offered Breadth courses, no petitions out of the Breadth requirement will be granted.*

A list of breadth categories and courses be found on the SEOE website:

[https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/earth\\_ocean\\_and\\_environment/myseoe/grad-handbooks.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/earth_ocean_and_environment/myseoe/grad-handbooks.php). Courses taken outside the SEOE or university cannot be substituted for this requirement.

#### 4.4.3 Seminar Attendance Requirement

All Ph.D. students must register for GEOL 800 in all semesters until they graduate and must attend a minimum of 75% of the weekly seminars to remain in good standing. For exceptional circumstances, students may petition for an exemption to the Graduate Studies Director. Students who are not registered for GEOL 800, and have not obtained permission from the Graduate Studies Director will be considered not in good standing, and may thus be ineligible for funding from the SEOE or other sources.

#### 4.4.4 Seminar Presentation Requirement

All Ph.D. students must present public seminars on their research plans and progress at least once per year on the University of South Carolina, Columbia campus. Students on a normal timetable can partially satisfy this requirement by including their Dissertation Proposal and Comprehensive Examination presentations. Students may also present at Graduate Student Day competitions, the SEOE seminar & Brown Bag meetings, etc.

#### 4.4.5 Publication Requirements

To complete degree requirements, all Ph.D. students must publish at least one paper, and submit or publish a second paper in a refereed scientific journal. Both papers should be from work carried out as part of their Ph.D. studies. In particular:

***Paper in Press or in Print Requirement:*** All Ph.D. students are required to publish (i.e., *in press* or *in print*) one paper from their doctoral research in a refereed scientific journal<sup>1</sup>. Publications from previous M.S. or other degrees, and work not directly related to the Doctoral research of the candidate cannot satisfy this requirement. The aforementioned paper must be reviewed by the Doctoral Committee *prior to submission*. The student must be first author on the paper, and his/her contribution to the paper must be evident and substantial. The paper used as part of the Comprehensive Exam (below) satisfies this requirement.

***Submitted Paper Requirement:*** Prior to the Dissertation Defense, the student is required to have submitted a second paper from his/her Dissertation work to a refereed scientific journal. Publications

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<sup>1</sup> The journal should be listed in the Science Citation Index and/or the Education Research Index

from work not directly related to the Doctoral research of the candidate or from previous M.S. or other degrees cannot satisfy this requirement.

#### **4.5 Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal / Qualifying Exam**

Once a Ph.D. student has selected a Dissertation Advisor and identified a dissertation topic, he/she should assemble his/her Doctoral Committee members to discuss and evaluate the proposed research. A written Dissertation Proposal must be submitted to the student's committee at least two weeks prior to the presentation.

The Dissertation Proposal / Qualifying Exam consists of:

- (1) A technical research presentation of the proposed research for the Doctoral Committee. This proposal presentation is open to the public and the date should be publicly announced at least one week in advance. The presentation is followed by technical questions from the public at the discretion of the committee chair.
- (2) A private meeting with the Doctoral Committee in which the proposed research is discussed. The Committee will determine whether the student is qualified to carry out the proposed research and whether the proposed project is a viable research study.

If the majority of the committee decides the proposal is not adequate for Ph.D. study, the student has the option to repeat the qualifying exam within 120 days. If the second exam is also unsatisfactory, the student will be terminated from the program. The Committee, at its discretion, may recommend that the student apply for a transfer to the M.S. program.

The earlier the qualifying exam takes place, the sooner the student can focus on his/her specific research needs. With this in mind, it is recommended the Dissertation Proposal / Qualifying Exam be scheduled within one calendar year from the start of related graduate classwork. If the exam has not taken place by the end of the second year, the student will be not in good standing or recommended for transfer to the M.S. program.

The Dissertation proposal must be completed at least one full academic year prior to the date at which the Ph.D. degree is granted. A copy of the approved proposal and the determination of the committee must be filed with the SEOE Graduate Studies Office within one week of the exam. These forms must be accompanied by the appropriate program assessment forms, which are submitted by the Dissertation Advisor or another faculty member of the student's Doctoral Committee (see Section 6).

#### **4.6 Ph.D. Program of Study**

All students enrolled in the Ph.D. program must identify in consultation with their Dissertation Advisor and the members of their Doctoral Committee their dissertation research topic and the coursework required for the them to obtain the background required to complete his/her dissertation work. This coursework should be listed in the Program of Study even if it does not satisfy any of the requirements listed above. No expired coursework can be included in the Program of Study (see Section 4.8).

It is emphasized that the course requirements (see Section 4.4.1) represent the minimum hours, which must be included in the Program of Study and should not be interpreted as an upper limit. The Program of Study may include additional coursework, beyond the minimum required hours and should be in accordance with the requirements listed in Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2

The Program of Study form should be prepared and submitted within two weeks following the Qualifying Exam (see Section 4.5). The Graduate Studies Director and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve this form.

#### **4.7 Transfer of Graduate Credit**

A limited number of credits may be transferred into the doctoral program. Graduate credits that are not part of a completed degree or certificate program in UofSC or another institution may be transferred to the Ph.D. program subject to the following restrictions:

- (1) The transferred credits do not constitute more than 9 or 18 hours for a student with a 30 or 60 hour requirement, respectively, and do not include any credits obtained as part of Thesis Preparation (GEOL 799) or Directed Individual Studies (GEOL 790) course.
- (2) The credits are relevant to the Ph.D. program and approved by the Doctoral Committee.
- (3) The credits are from an accredited institution recognized by the UofSC; carry graduate credit with a grade of B or better; and are earned within eight years prior to completion of the Ph.D. degree.
- (4) The credit transfer is approved by the Graduate Studies Director.

Applications for credit transfer should be made by the student to the Graduate Studies Director. The application should include an affidavit stating that all of the restrictions listed above have been met and must be signed by all members of the Doctoral Committee.

#### **4.8 Coursework Expiration / Re-Certification Process**

All work to be applied toward the Ph.D., exclusive of the M.S. degree portion, should be completed within the eight years prior to graduation. Courses listed in the Program of Study that have expired can be re-certified through an application to the Graduate School. As part of the re-certification process, a faculty member from the Geology & Geophysics program of the SEOE (usually the faculty member teaching the course to be re-certified) will have to assess the current knowledge of the student requesting the re-certification. This assessment can be either through an interview, oral, written exam, or a combination of the above.

#### **4.9 Admission to Candidacy**

A student is officially admitted to Candidacy when all three of the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The student has formed his/her Doctoral Committee by completing the appropriate form and the Graduate Studies Director and Graduate School have approved the committee.
2. The student has submitted his/her official Program of Study form and it has been approved.
3. The student has made his/her Dissertation Proposal Presentation and passed the Qualifying Exam.

Admission to candidacy must occur at least one full academic year before graduation and no later than three years after admission to the Ph.D. program.

#### **4.10 Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination**

All Ph.D. candidates must satisfactorily pass a comprehensive exam on subject areas pertinent to their Dissertation.

The comprehensive examination cannot be scheduled until the student has prepared a paper that will be submitted for publication (see Section 4.4.5 for restrictions on the paper) or before he/she has been



officially admitted to candidacy (see Section 4.9). The paper fulfills the requirement for the written portion of the comprehensive examination. The expectation is that the manuscript will be submitted within 4 weeks of a successful comprehensive exam. A copy of the draft manuscript will be submitted to the Graduate Director's office prior to the announcement of the Comprehensive Examination. The Comprehensive Exam will be considered complete upon proof of submission of the manuscript for publication. Proof of acceptance or publication will be required before the student is cleared for graduation (see Section 4.11).

As part of the comprehensive examination, the student will be required to make an oral defense of and answer questions related to the paper.

If a student fails the comprehensive examination, the committee may recommend the student transfer to the M.S. program or can reschedule a new examination for a future date not earlier than 30 days and not later than 120 days after the initial examination. The second examination may be an alternate format, to be determined by the committee. If the student fails the second examination, then he/she will be terminated from the Ph.D. program or he/she may be transferred to the M.S. program. The latter requires the approval of the Doctoral Committee.

The results of each Comprehensive Examination meeting should be filed with the Graduate Studies Office within one week of the defense using the appropriate form (see [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/earth\\_ocean\\_and\\_environment/myseoe/grad\\_frequently\\_used.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/earth_ocean_and_environment/myseoe/grad_frequently_used.php)). The form must be accompanied by the appropriate program assessment forms, which are submitted by the Dissertation Advisor or another faculty member of the student's Doctoral Committee (see Section 6).

The comprehensive examination is normally given after the candidate has completed all of the courses required by the Program of Study except those for which the student may be currently registered, but cannot occur earlier than 60 days prior to the Dissertation Defense.

#### **4.11 Completion of Dissertation / Dissertation Defense**

A written Dissertation is required of all students in the Ph.D. program. The Dissertation must be reviewed and accepted by the Doctoral Committee members before it can be publicly defended. This review should take no more than 4 weeks. No Dissertation Defense date may be set prior to approval by the committee or before the comprehensive examination has been passed and registered with the Graduate School.

Every Ph.D. student is required to defend his/her Dissertation in public before the Doctoral Committee. This consists of a presentation, a public question-and-answer period, and a private consultation with the Doctoral Committee. This defense must be publicly announced and recorded with the Graduate Director and the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance by submission of:

- (1) An abstract with the date/time/place of the Dissertation Defense.
- (2) Proof of acceptance or publication by a refereed journal of the paper used for the written part of the comprehensive exam.
- (3) Proof of submission of the second paper (see publication requirements, Section 4.4.5).
- (4) Submission of the Dissertation Defense Announcement and Information for Doctoral Commencement (G-DDA) form available through the Graduate School webpage.

The Defense must take place on the Columbia campus and all members of the Doctoral Committee must be present for this event. Participation via videoconference is allowed only for a member who cannot be present at the time of the scheduled Defense. This must be approved in advance by the Graduate Studies Director. Any arrangements for videoconference must be carried out by the student in collaboration with their Dissertation Advisor.

The student should consult the Graduate School for general Ph.D. regulations and deadlines before his/her defense. The Dissertation Defense should be given no later than 30 days before the date at which the candidate expects to receive his or her degree. Students must be registered for at least one hour of graduate credit in the term in which the Dissertation Defense takes place.

#### **4.12 Ph.D. Dissertation Submission**

Ph.D. students are required to enroll in at least one hour of Dissertation credit during the semester in which they are to receive their degree.

The Dissertation should be formatted according to the requirements set by the Graduate School (see Dissertation Guidelines at [https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/academics/thesis\\_and\\_dissertation/formatting\\_your\\_thesis\\_dissertation/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/academics/thesis_and_dissertation/formatting_your_thesis_dissertation/index.php)). In addition, the SEOE requires the names of the Doctoral Committee members and the Dean of the Graduate School be listed on the first page under their respective signatures.

The Dissertation is read in draft and in final form by the advisor and committee members before submission to the Graduate School for the Dean's (Graduate School) approval.

Students are required to submit an electronic version of the hardbound Dissertation in identical format as a single PDF file. As a matter of courtesy, it is recommended that the student provides a bound copy of the final version of the Dissertation to their Dissertation Advisor, and an electronic copy to the Graduate Studies Office.

#### **4.13 Time Limits / Restrictions**

After admission, students are expected to make satisfactory and timely progress toward their degree.

Students that have not been enrolled for one full year are ineligible to register for classes. To lift this restriction the student is required to update his/her admission through the application of a Change of Status form through the Graduate School.

Following three years of non-enrollment prior to earning the Ph.D. degree, the previous admission of a student to the Ph.D. program becomes invalid. Degree-seeking students wishing to continue must thus re-apply and fulfill the admission requirements in effect at the time of re-application. Upon re-admission, these students are subject to regulations in the current Graduate Studies Bulletin and to the current Geology and Geophysics program requirements.

Students who fail to graduate within 10 years of their initial registration are automatically withdrawn from the Ph.D. program.

### **5. Graduate Student Progress Evaluations**

In order for the program to ensure that students adhere to program requirements and make timely and satisfactory progress towards their degree, the Graduate Studies Committee will review the progress for M.S. and Ph.D. students annually, toward the end of the spring semester. The review consists of two stages.

- (i) Students must write and submit an annual review progress report showing his/her progress in relation to the guidelines of this document (see Graduate Student Annual Progress Report form in the Appendices).

- (ii) Following review of the annual progress report, the Graduate Studies Director at his/her discretion may call for a formal meeting with the student and members of the Graduate Studies Committee. If such a meeting is scheduled, this will be conducted without the student's Thesis/Dissertation Advisor or any of his/her committee members present.

This review mechanism is intended to ensure that students achieve timely and satisfactory progress towards their degrees and to address any individual concerns. In addition, such a meeting may be scheduled at the student's request at any time.

## **6. Program Assessment**

In order to ensure that the graduate program maintains high standards, the School assesses it annually. The mechanisms used for this assessment include a number of processes, such as: (1) statistics on current student progress; (2) alumni post-graduation work placement; and (3) quality and rigor based on committee member evaluations performed at the time of major committee meetings (i.e., Thesis/Dissertation Proposal, Comprehensive Exam, etc.).

All assessments are carried out for the program as a whole and are not associated with individual students. Evaluation forms filled in by the committee members are anonymous and are submitted to the Graduate Studies Office online. No outcome of a committee examination / meeting will be recorded without the program assessment forms associated with that meeting being filed.

## **7. International Students**

The SEOE has been a host to numerous international students. We are lucky to enjoy a multicultural and diverse population amongst our graduate student population and we hope to continue doing so.

The International Programs for Students at the UofSC ([https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/international\\_student\\_services/](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/international_student_services/)) is dedicated to providing the services and support needed for international students to pursue their educational goals. Their staff is dedicated to assisting students prior to arrival and throughout their study. All immigration issues are dealt with by that office. Further, their website provides useful information ranging from tips about the university and living in the US to immigration and travel concerns.

International students should be particularly careful to follow the requirements of their specific program because failure to do so may have implications for their immigration status. Further, some immigration requirements may deviate from the minimum requirements (e.g., maintenance of full-time status, etc.) described in this manual. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that he/she adheres to both academic requirements and to immigration regulations. The advisors of International Programs for Students at UofSC will be able to clarify any issues that might arise. Their office is in the Close-Hipp building, Suite 470 (phone: (803) 777-7461, email: [iss@sc.edu](mailto:iss@sc.edu))

The University of South Carolina requires that international students take an International Teaching Assistant (ITA) assessment before they are allowed to teach or instruct in labs as Instructional or Teaching Assistants. The assessment is carried out by the English Programs for Internationals (EPI) at the UofSC, before the beginning of each academic semester. Students may request an exemption from the ITA Assessment if they are native speakers of English or have other acceptable justifications (e.g., previous experience of teaching in English). All exemptions must be processed by the English Programs for Internationals.

Depending on the assessment, a student may obtain a score in one of the three categories: Satisfactory (85-100), Marginal (75-84) or At Risk (20-74). Students assigned an "At Risk" mark are not allowed to instruct undergraduate students. "At Risk" students are recommended to take a course that aims to improve their communicative competence to perform effectively in undergraduate instructional settings

at UofSC. “Marginal” students are allowed to teach, but it is recommended they take special classes to improve their competence.

## 8. Graduate Student Travel Grants

Travel funds are available to partially support the presentation of research results by graduate students of the Geology & Geophysics program of the SEOE at regional, national and international meetings. Students may request a specific amount of support, but the level of support allotted may vary depending on the number of applicants, availability of funds, and the number of travel grants previously awarded to the applicant. For some meetings, students may be required to help staff at a SEOE booth during part of the meeting. Students applying for Travel Grants should be currently enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours. Exceptions apply to students in their final semester of their studies wherein only one credit hour is required.

### 8.1 Application Deadlines

	<b>Travel Dates</b>	<b>Applications Accepted</b>
CYCLE 1:	July 1 – Sept 30	June 1 – 7
CYCLE 2:	October 1 – December 31	September 1-7
CYCLE 3:	January 1 – March 31	December 1-7
CYCLE 4:	April 1 – June 30	March 1-7

Requests for travel support must be submitted before the meeting and by the general deadlines shown above (specific deadlines are published each semester). **Students are also encouraged to simultaneously apply to the Graduate School for travel grants.**

### 8.2 Application Procedure

An application for a travel grant must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office before the deadline and requires the following items:

1. A completed Graduate Student Travel Fund Award form (available through the Graduate Studies webpage) identifying the meeting she/he wishes to attend, the title of the paper, and an itemized estimate of the travel expenses the student will incur.
2. A copy of the abstract submitted to the meeting. For meetings whose abstract deadlines have not yet passed, a draft abstract is sufficient, but documentation of abstract acceptance is required before funds can be dispersed.
3. Statement of all other sources of support for this meeting and a signed statement from the advisor regarding available funding.

### 8.3 Travel Grant Awards

The Graduate Studies Director will review travel grant requests and make recommendations to the Director of the Program. Students who are not in good standing are not eligible. Evidence of funding from other sources is viewed favorably. No reimbursement will be made for expenses until the student submits a formal acceptance letter/email from the meeting organizer and a copy of the abstract. If awarded a travel grant, the student must submit a Travel Authorization (TA) form before the trip and a Travel Reimbursement Voucher (TRV) form after incurring expenses to receive the money awarded.

## 9. Graduate Student Awards

Graduate student awards provide an opportunity for the Program and University to recognize excellence in M.S. and Ph.D. research, graduate teaching, and excellence in presentation of scientific research to a general university audience.

To this end, the Geology & Geophysics Program evaluates its graduate students for the following awards and competitions on an annual basis:

1. The Stephen F. Taber Award for Outstanding Doctoral Research
2. The Stephen F. Taber Award for Outstanding Master's Research
3. The Stephen F. Taber Award for Outstanding Teaching

In addition, the program evaluates Taber student applicants to represent the program at the university-wide Graduate Student Day competitions: <http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/gsd.asp>.

4. Graduate Student Day Oral Presentation Competition
5. Graduate Student Day Poster Presentation Competition

Each award is evaluated independently of all other awards. Therefore, a graduate student must be explicitly nominated for each award to be considered for an award. Nomination for one award does not imply nomination or consideration for any other award.

To make the award process as fair and objective as possible and to maintain consistency in the process from year to year, criteria and procedures have been established for each award. Students must meet eligibility requirements for each award for which they are nominated or petition for a waiver through a letter of justification submitted to the Graduate Director. Students granted waivers will be allowed to compete for the award in question. All applicants must be in good standing.

Selection of award winners will be based on the recommendation of one or more selection committees assembled by the SEOE Director and the Graduate Director specifically for this purpose according to specific guidelines. These committees will report their recommendations to the SEOE Director, who will announce the awards.

The Oral and Poster presentations required by these awards shall be scheduled during the normal SEOE seminar series, which may be extended in length on the day(s) of these competitions.

## **10. Assistantships, Tuition and Fees**

Financial support is available to a limited number of students each year in the form of instructional (IA), teaching (TA), and research (RA) assistantships and fellowships. Students are also eligible and encouraged to apply for fellowships through the appropriate federal and private organizations (i.e., NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, US EPA STAR Fellowships, GRO Graduate Fellowships, etc.). The Graduate school homepage provides a list of fellowships available to students. More information can be found at:

[https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/paying\\_for\\_graduate\\_school/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/paying_for_graduate_school/index.php)

According to the University of South Carolina regulations (Academic Affairs, ACAF 4.00) “*a graduate assistant is a student enrolled in the Graduate School who assists, under faculty, supervision, in the conduct of the University’s total education program by providing teaching, research or other services*”.

Graduate assistants are expected to devote full-time effort to their studies and their assistantship responsibilities. They are, therefore, discouraged from having additional employment on or off campus, during the term(s) for which they are appointed.

The holder of an assistantship may receive additional aid in the form of a fellowship or traineeship requiring no additional duties.

The Geology & Geophysics program of the SEOE, following University and College instructions, has established guidelines (see Sections 10.1 and 10.2) for determining minimum salaries and tuition support for graduate students on Instructional Assistantships (IAs) and Research Assistantships (RAs).

The SEOE Program Director and Graduate Studies Director review the following criteria to determine whether IAs, TAs and RAs should be renewed:

1. Teaching performance from student evaluations.
2. The graduate studies committee review of IA/TA/RA academic progress.
3. Personal recommendations by the professor of record for courses in which the IA assisted.
4. Performance of research as evaluated by the Thesis / Dissertation Advisor.
5. Good standing within the SEOE.

## **10.1 Instructional and Teaching Assistantships**

Applicants to the Graduate Program of the SEOE are considered for graduate assistantships if requested in their application. Every semester the Graduate Studies office will assess assistantship availability for current and new incoming graduate students. Graduate students should communicate with their Thesis/Dissertation advisor about their funding needs. Each semester the graduate program requires that the advisors request funding for their students. The students should be aware of this and remind their advisors of their requirements.

All IAs/TAs are required to have completed the Graduate Teaching/Instructional Assistant workshop that is provided by the Graduate School before the start of each academic semester (usually August and January each year). In addition, International Students are required to have successfully passed the International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Assessment (see Section 7).

Salaries for all IA/TA graduate students on 20hr/wk appointments during the academic year and associated tuition supplements are determined in collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office as part of the annual budgeting process.

Students on IA/TA support are required to be registered for six to nine credit hours per academic semester, for which they will receive tuition support in the form of a supplement. The tuition supplement nominally provides support for up to 15 credit hours per year, with the possibility that tuition support for additional hours in an academic may be approved if resources allow. The tuition supplement is established by the SEOE as a credit with the Bursar's Office against which tuition will be charged each semester. Students are responsible for any portion of their tuition not covered by the assistantship. Fees are assessed by the University and are the responsibility of the student.

The salary level for full IAs and TAs is set by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and will be announced by the Graduate program at the beginning of each academic year. Any reduction in IA salary below that defined for a full-time IA will carry a proportionally reduced workload and tuition supplement.

Program IA and TA funding is limited to a total of four academic semesters for a M.S. student and eight academic semesters for a Ph.D. student. Summer support is usually provided through RAs from research grants by individual faculty.

M.S. students in their 5<sup>th</sup> or later academic semester and Ph.D. students in their 9<sup>th</sup> or later academic semester can petition the Graduate Studies Director for IA or TA support. Such petitions will be considered under exceptional circumstances and subject to satisfactory academic performance and availability of funds.

## **10.2 Research Assistantships**

Research assistantships are provided only by individual faculty through research grants that are administered by the Office of Sponsor Awards Management (SAM) at UofSC.

The minimum salary for a full-time RA (*i.e.*, 20hr/wk appointment) should be the same as the established IA salary. A reduction in salary will carry a proportionally-reduced workload.

Graduate students on RA support will be provided with a tuition supplement through the grant funding their salary. Students on RAs are required to take the minimum load mandated by the Graduate School (*i.e.*, six hrs/semester) and should expect to receive tuition support from the grant at least for the minimum load. The tuition supplement is established by the SEOE as a credit with the Bursar's Office against which tuition will be charged each semester. Students are responsible for any portion of their tuition not covered by the assistantship. Fees are assessed by the University and are the responsibility of the student.

## **10.3 Outside Funding**

According to University of South Carolina regulations (Academic Affairs, ACAF 4.00), graduate assistantships or internships funded by nonprofit organizations of State agencies other than USC are subject to approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. Students appointed to such positions will work for the sponsoring organizations, but will be under the general supervision of the program and their duties should be related to their academic programs. Graduate assistantships funded by organizations external to the University are considered to be grants and are administered by the Office of Sponsored Awards. These appointments must be approved in advance and must include funds to cover a portion of, or all, of a student's tuition. Any portion of the tuition not covered by the external sponsoring agency must be paid by the student.

## **10.4 Tuition Rates**

For the most recent tuition and fee rates, students are directed to the Office of the Bursar web page ([https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/bursar/tuition\\_and\\_required\\_fees/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/bursar/tuition_and_required_fees/index.php)).

The Bursar's Office considers a student enrolled in 12 hours or more to be full-time for tuition and fee purposes. However, the Graduate School and the SEOE consider a student with a graduate assistantship enrolled in 6 hours or more per academic semester to be academically full-time. Students with a full IA in both Fall and Spring will have up to 15 credit hours funded over the two semesters.

Students working on an assistantship during summer must register for a minimum of three credit hour hours.

Students are not allowed to hold outside jobs while receiving support from the SEOE, and all students are encouraged to maintain full-time residence, including summers, while pursuing their degrees. Provisions are made for students carrying out their research at remote sites so they can maintain continuity in the program and residence requirements of the University.

## **10.5 University Fees**

In addition to tuition, Graduate Students must pay: (1) the Student Health Center Fee, (2) the Subsidized Insurance Fee, (3) the Technology Fee, (4) the Matriculation Fee (applies to new students only) and (5) the International student enrollment fee (only for international students requiring a visa). These fees are

in addition to tuition charges and are not covered by the tuition supplements received by students with an IA, TA or RA. Students should confirm with the Office of the Bursar's web page ([https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/bursar/tuition\\_and\\_required\\_fees/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/bursar/tuition_and_required_fees/index.php)) for the most recent information concerning tuition and fees.

## **10.6 Health Insurance**

Graduate student health care is coordinated through UofSC's Student Health Services ([https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_health\\_services/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/index.php) and 803-777-3175). They work with the Academic-HealthPlan branch of Blue Cross Blue Shield. The UofSC AHP website (<https://sc.myahpcare.com/>) has the links to check your benefits and other information. To check enrollment status and to download an ID card go to <https://www.southcarolinablues.com>. Alternatively, you can download the MyHeathToolKit in an app store.

New students will receive an email from Student Health Services saying that they need to provide proof of insurance or enroll for health care. Student Health Services recommends actively enrolling through the link provided in the email rather than wait to be automatically enrolled, as you will receive your Member ID more rapidly.

## **11. Access to Graduate Student Records**

Each enrolled student or former student may inspect and review official, non-confidential educational records or files directly related to that student. Standard procedures for access to student records are on file in the Main SEOE office.

In lieu of the standard procedures, students may obtain certain types of information contained in their records by making inquiry through the Graduate Studies Committee or the student's Thesis/Dissertation advisor. Such inquiries should be limited to specific information such as dates or grades, or establishing the presence or absence of pertinent materials. Information otherwise inaccessible to the student will not be communicated to him/her through such an inquiry.

## **12. Appeal Process**

Decisions of the Graduate Studies Committee and / or the Graduate Studies Director can be appealed to the SEOE Director. The SEOE Director can use an appropriate standing committee, or appoint an Appeal Committee to review the appeal. In no case can a faculty member with a vested interest in the issue serve in the appeal review process.

## **13. Representation on Faculty Committees**

A graduate student representative is selected by the Graduate Student Caucus of the Geology and Geophysics program of the SEOE to attend faculty meetings. The graduate students elect this representative from the graduate student population. The elected representative must have completed at least one year of his/her program and plan to be enrolled for the entirety of his/her term. He/she serves as the official voice of the graduate student body on these committees. Matters of general concern are voiced to the faculty through the representative.

## **14. Concurrent Enrollment**



The Graduate School offers dual degree programs in certain areas to permit student's to work on degrees concurrently. Students enrolled in a graduate degree in the Geological Sciences can petition the Graduate Studies Director for permission to enroll in a second degree. The petition should be formally in writing and should include the following information:

- (1) Relevance, if any, to the student's current graduate program of studies in Geological Sciences
- (2) Explanation on how the additional workload will impact progress on the current graduate program of studies (e.g., would this delay the expected graduation time? etc.)
- (3) Letter of support from the Research Advisor
- (4) Support of the student's Thesis/Doctoral Committee

Permission to enroll in a second degree program will not be granted to students that are not fulfilling all requirements related to their Program of Study.

Students concurrently enrolled in M.S. or Ph.D. programs are required to submit an individual Program of Study for each degree program and no more than nine semester hours may be common to two or more programs of study. See [http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=76&navoid=2130#concurrent\\_and\\_dual\\_enrollment\\_programs\\_of\\_study](http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=76&navoid=2130#concurrent_and_dual_enrollment_programs_of_study)

## **15. Course Registration, Change of Schedule, Refund of Fees**

Registration for graduate courses is conducted via Self Service Carolina (<https://my.sc.edu/>). Self Service Carolina can be used to register, change your schedule, check your fees, view and print out your class schedule, apply financial aid and scholarships to your bill, pay your fees via VISA/MasterCard/Discover Card or Electronic Check Transfer (ECT), or check the status of your financial aid application.

If you experience registration problems while using Self Service Carolina, call the Office of the University Registrar at 777-5555 during business hours (8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.), or send an e-mail to the Office of the University Registrar by going to [https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/registrar/toolbox/contact.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/toolbox/contact.php). If you experience problems related to fees and/or fee payment, call the Bursar's Office at 777-4233 during business hours (8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) ([https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/bursar/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/bursar/index.php)).

Changes in schedule can occur only within specific periods after the start of a semester. These deadlines are published by the University Registrar's office in the Academic and Refund calendar (see [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/registrar/academic\\_calendars/2018-19\\_calendar.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/academic_calendars/2018-19_calendar.php)). Usually the last day to drop/add is within a week or less after the start of the session. If a grade (including W) is assigned, then the student is responsible for any charges that might occur. In order, to avoid charges, students are strongly recommended to consult with the registrar's office before making any schedule changes. The guidelines for refunds are published in the Graduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.sc.edu/index.php?catoid=94>) and it is the responsibility of the student to be aware of all relevant information.

The Graduate program does not provide advice or intervention in the matter of billing on behalf of the students, except in the event that an erroneous charge was the result of an administrative error of this office. In such cases, the student should request correction by applying in writing to the Graduate Studies Director.