

Geography, PhD

The Doctor of Philosophy in geography prepares students for geographic research and teaching. The program is research-focused and designed for students seeking a career in academia, and for public, private, and non-profit sector positions that require advanced research skills.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the geography doctoral program in the School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability will demonstrate:

- both broad knowledge of the field of geography and deep knowledge in their area of research concentration;
- an ability to communicate their research concisely and effectively to both general and specialist audiences in written and verbal formats;
- an ability to formulate research questions; select, design, and apply appropriate research methods (e.g., testable hypotheses, data collection, management, analytical techniques); and utilize critical thinking skills to build knowledge, theory, and/or practice in their area of research concentration;
- competence in teaching geography, environmental, or sustainability-related courses; and
- understanding of and an ability to operate under professional standards of ethical conduct.

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy in geography requires at least 72 s.h. of graduate credit and is designed to be completed in four years. Up to 33 s.h. of transfer credit may apply with approval from the School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability and the Graduate College.

A minimum of 39 s.h. must be earned at the University of Iowa after program admission in courses numbered 3000 or above. This must include at least 15 s.h. of regular coursework—not research hours or seminars—beyond the required courses that follow; these courses are numbered 5000 or above and preferably in School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability courses (prefix SEES). UI coursework must also include at least two graduate seminars, excluding SEES:7000. Seminars from another department in an area relevant to the student's research expertise may be used with advisor approval.

Students take SEES:7000 School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability Research Colloquium (1 s.h.) each semester they are in residence.

Required Courses

The following courses are typically completed in the first year except for SEES:5050, which is typically completed in the second year.

Course #	Title	Hours
SEES:5010	School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability Foundations	2
SEES:5020	Research Resources	1
SEES:5050	Research and Writing	3

SEES:7270	Orientation, Scholarly Integrity, and Responsible Conduct of Research	1
CLAS:5100/ RHET:5100	Practicum: College Teaching and Professional Development for Teaching Assistants	arr.

Students must also complete their plan of study, their dissertation proposal, the PhD comprehensive examination, and the successful completion and final examination of the PhD dissertation.

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website. Application information can be found on the School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability website.

A previous degree in geography is not required, but applicants must have an academic background relevant to the field. Strength in social science, environmental science, geographic information science, or another relevant field and interest in exploring the spatial perspectives that characterize modern geography are important in admission decisions.

Career Advancement

The Doctor of Philosophy program prepares students to carry on creative and productive research in geography and related fields. University of Iowa graduates hold positions in college and university faculties, private research organizations, and business and government.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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This sample plan is currently being reviewed and will be added at a later date.