

# Doctor of Philosophy in Geography

---

The PhD program is for students interested in research, teaching opportunities, careers with NGOs, government consulting and more. The program offers concentrations in cultural-regional geography of Africa, East Asia, Latin America, Russia/Eurasia, and the United States; geographic information science (including cartography and remote sensing); and physical/environmental geography. The program includes courses, seminars, individual research and reading, and preparation of a dissertation. Although no "outside minor" is formally required of candidates, the department favors study in auxiliary departments. Learn more about our faculty (<http://geog.ku.edu/faculty/>) on our website.

## Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/>) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

## Graduate Admission

Applicants without prior training in geography are welcome but are required to improve their basic knowledge of the broad divisions of geography: systematic, methodological, and regional. Courses taken to remedy deficiencies may not count toward graduate degrees.

The following items must be received to complete the application file:

1. **A completed** Graduate Application Form (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>) **found on the Graduate Admissions website.**
2. **A current resume/CV**
3. **A Statement of Interest and Goals.** This is included in the on-line application form. The Graduate Studies Committee places considerable importance on the thoughtfulness of your remarks – in particular, we are interested in learning about (1) your specific interests within geography or atmospheric science and why they are important and interesting to you, (2) what you envision as your educational and career objectives and how a degree from KU Geography & Atmospheric Science helps to meet those objectives, and (3) which of our faculty members you think would be an appropriate graduate advisor and mentor.
4. **A scanned copy of an official transcript** can be uploaded at the time of application. Official, degree conferred transcripts will be required prior to the second semester of study. NOTE: Documents uploaded with your application are not considered official. KU does not consider transcripts that come from applicants or that have been in the applicant's possession as official.
5. **Three confidential letters of recommendation** sent by referees who are familiar with your academic and/or professional activities and who can address your likelihood of success in graduate school. If possible, we prefer letters from professors, but applicants

returning to school after a lengthy absence may substitute letters from supervisors. Note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and to confirm that the required letters have been sent by the deadline. When using the on-line reference form to list references, you must include valid e-mail addresses. Once you have completed and submitted your application, your references will be contacted directly via email with directions for submitting their letters of recommendation.

\*\*Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are not required for the application. Applicants may choose to submit GRE scores if they feel it will help inform the department of their academic abilities. However, choosing not to submit scores will not affect your chances of admission.\*\*

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Non-native speakers of English must meet English proficiency requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>).

Submit your graduate application online (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>). For questions, contact:

The Graduate (<https://geog.ku.edu/staff/>) **Program Coordinator**

## Required Courses

GEOG 805 (History of Geographic Thought); GEOG 980 Seminar in Geography: \_\_\_\_\_ (Colloquium) for 1 credit hour during each of the first 2 semesters of residence at KU; Non-credit 8-hour Responsible Scholarship session held just before classes start in the spring semester; attend the Department's New Graduate Student Orientation (non-credit). For elective course options, please review the 500 level or above Geography courses listed in the academic catalog (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/geography/#courseinventory>). Electives are to be chosen in consultation with your advisor.

## Research Skills Requirement

Research skills are important elements of any graduate program and should complement the student's research topic. Coursework necessary to meet this requirement should commence early in the program. Selection of a particular Research Skills option must be approved by the student's advisor and student's committee members. A student's Research Skills requirement may be met by 1 of the following:

1. Demonstrate a reading, writing, and speaking capability in a single foreign language sufficient to enable the student to do field work without an interpreter. An examination for competence, including written and oral portions, will be conducted by the appropriate language department having expertise in that language.
2. Demonstrate a satisfactory capability in 1 research skill from the list below. The actual courses must be approved by the student's advisor and committee members.
  - a. Computer Science--complete a computer-programming course in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (e.g., C++, Fortran, or Visual Basic) with a grade of B or higher and create a substantial computer program that illustrates a geographic application of that language. Both the course and computer program must be approved by the Computer Programming Committee of the Department of Geography.
  - b. Mathematics--complete 9 hours of courses at the 500-level or above with a grade of B or higher.

- c. Statistics--complete 9 hours of courses outside the Geography Department at the 500-level or above with a grade of B or higher.
- d. An outside discipline relevant to the student's field(s) of specialization within geography (e.g. anthropology, biology, economics, geology, history, or psychology) -- complete 9 hours of courses at the 500-level or above with a grade of B or higher (Atmospheric science courses may be used for this option, but not courses listed or cross-listed as geography.) Students may petition the Graduate Affairs Committee to have 9 hours of courses at the 500-level or above in multiple departments fulfill this requirement.

Students whose native language is not English may, in some cases, use their native language to fulfill Research Skills but only if the language is considered an adequate research tool for their program and is endorsed by the student's advisor and committee members. Using a native language to fulfill the Research Skills requirement must have GSC approval.

In addition, the department requires that any PhD student admitted after Fall 2011 must successfully complete the Responsible Scholarship seminar offered by the department.

## Proposal/Oral Comp:

The comprehensive examination is scheduled when the student and the faculty advisor believe that competence in the specialty or specialties has been achieved. It consists of two parts: written questions submitted by the committee members and then oral examination. For the written questions, they may be open-book or closed at the discretion of the individual committee member submitting the questions, and the student normally will have up to 8 hours to complete each set of questions. In the oral section, students often are asked to elaborate and comment on their written answers. The focus is on the proposal, however, with probes into its scope, justification, and methodology being common.

Two grades are possible for the overall examination: "satisfactory," and "unsatisfactory." In the unsatisfactory case, the student may be allowed to repeat the process one more time upon recommendation of the committee. Such repetition can be undertaken no sooner than 90 days after the last exam. Approval from the Office of Graduate Studies must be secured for the scheduling of this procedure and the request must be submitted two weeks prior to the proposed date for the examination.

## Final Defense:

The student must complete an oral defense of their dissertation. The committee will be made up of at least 5 members in compliance with the Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy. A majority of the committee members must approve the defense with an assessment of "satisfactory", "unsatisfactory", or "honors".

Students that fail the defense on their first attempt may repeat the defense at the recommendation of the degree program one more time. Such repetition can be undertaken no sooner than 90 days after the last defense.

While completing degree requirements, graduate students are expected to understand and follow Office Graduate Studies policies (<https://ogs.ku.edu/policies/>) relevant to their student status and academic standing

## Handbook for Graduate Students

Further details regarding degree requirements can be found in the Department's Graduate Student Handbook.