Doctor of Philosophy in Geology

Why study geology at the University of Kansas?

KU Geology is a leader among geoscience programs, where students learn to serve society through the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge. Graduates may go on for post-doctoral training or are employed in academia, the energy and water industries, as well as in government agencies, with high levels of job satisfaction.

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 (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies) section of the online catalog. Please consult the Departments & Programs (http://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

Admission is based on academic records including grade-point average and general preparedness in geology and supporting sciences, letters of recommendation, and the applicant’s stated academic and professional interests and goals. Results of the aptitude tests of the Graduate Record Examination are required. An attempt is made to balance the interests of students with the availability of faculty members to supervise them and laboratory space in which they may work. Consequently, new admissions in areas of geology that are heavily subscribed or in which the department has little expertise may be limited. As a result, some students who meet KU’s minimum standard for admission may be refused. Students who do not hold master’s degrees in geology normally are admitted to pursue the master’s degree. Students with exceptional records may be invited to study for the Ph.D. without first earning the M.S. degree.

Submit your graduate application online (http://graduate.ku.edu/prospective-students). Inquiries may be sent to the Department:

The University of Kansas
Department of Geology
Ritchie Hall
1414 Naismith Drive, Room 254
Lawrence, KS 66045

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

Doctoral students can specialize in any area of faculty expertise, including sedimentology, paleontology, tectonics, geobiology, glaciology, geophysics and hydrogeology. Prospective Ph.D. candidates are subject to the same initial requirements as master’s students. The master’s degree is not a prerequisite for doctoral aspirancy. A student with a good background and good performance during the first two semesters may be invited to proceed directly toward the doctorate.

The student’s advisory committee and the student construct a curriculum that offers the best preparation for the chosen field of interest and satisfies the research skills requirement. Each student is expected to enroll in courses in supporting fields to develop a multidisciplinary approach to geology. The student must maintain at least a 3.0 grade-point average in geology and supporting science courses.

Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship Requirements

The university requires that every doctoral student have training in responsible scholarship and research skills pertinent to the field of research and appropriate to the doctoral level. This requirement must be met before taking the comprehensive oral exam. Doctoral students in geology meet this requirement by the following:

- Completion of GEOL 791: Ethics in the Geosciences with a grade of “B” or higher.
- With the approval of the advisory committee, the student may meet the research skills requirement by taking either a curriculum of at least three graduate-level courses outside the department that are relevant to the specialty, or by completing a combination of languages, research skills, and courses.

Either coursework plan must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, and a list of these courses must be in the student’s file.

Please contact your advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies for further information about research skills and responsible scholarship, and see the current policy on Doctoral Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog and in the KU Policy Library.

Admission to Candidacy

To be admitted to Ph.D. candidacy, a student must pass an oral comprehensive examination on the specialty in geology in which the student is doing doctoral research and on other relevant areas of geology and supporting sciences. The student must prepare and have approved a research proposal based on the doctoral research project before the oral comprehensive examination. The examination is based on the material presented in the proposal and its application to geology in general. The examination is conducted by a 5-member faculty committee; one member of the committee must be from a KU department other than geology and is appointed by Graduate Studies on recommendation of the department. The same committee is also responsible for conducting a final oral examination based on the doctoral dissertation. Three members of the committee supervise research and preparation for the dissertation.

Shared Doctoral Program with Kansas State University

The Department has a shared education program whereby doctoral students may study under the direction of a faculty member of the Department of Geology at Kansas State University, with a KU faculty member as co-chair of the dissertation committee. After one year of course work in Lawrence to fulfill the residency requirement, students may enroll at Kansas State University. Degrees are awarded by KU. For specific information on departmental practices in shaping individual curricula, in controlling general examinations, and in evaluating dissertation proposals, contact the department Director of Graduate Studies.