

# Masters Checklist

The objective of this document is to provide a checklist for our webpage to assist Masters and PhD applicants in navigating through the application process. By providing clear instructions along with links to the necessary tools and resources, we will obtain a competitive advantage over other institutions. Furthermore, creating this list for our webpage will result in less confusion during the review and collection of applicant materials.

The outline of this document is as follows: First, a telescopic view of checklists for both the Masters and PhD program is provided to quickly pinpoint any chronological problems. Second, the checklist is repeated but with far more detail including web links, mailing addresses, contact information, etc.

## Masters Applicant Checklist

*Note: While the checklists for ASP and Geography are identical, the second section notes some of the differences in the prerequisites and objectives.*

### *Preliminary Research*

1. Read introduction and objectives of the Masters Program.
2. Examine descriptions, themes, and research associated with **the four specializations**.
3. Review **prerequisites** for application to the graduate program.
4. Examine the **core courses** and **expectations** of the graduate program.
5. Review possible sources of **financial assistance** for graduate school.
6. Take careful note of **application deadlines**. Be sure to leave plenty of time for the processing of GRE and TOEFL scores.

### *Application Checklist*

7. Complete an **online application** for graduate school.
8. Pay the \$40 **application fee** (\$50 for International applications).
9. Order a practice examination booklet from the **GRE (optional)**
10. Make an appointment to take the **GRE Examination; arrange for scores to be sent to the Graduate Admissions Office and the Department of Geography**.
11. **International Students Only:** Register for the TOEFL examination.
12. Submit one **official transcript** for each institution attended to the **Graduate Admissions Office AND the Department of Geography**.
13. Arrange for three (**3**) letters of recommendation to be mailed **OR** submitted online with the application.
14. Prepare a 2 page (1200 word maximum) **statement of research interests and academic direction**. **Make sure that you identify a faculty "Mentor"** (which is described on page 5). Submit a copy to the **Department of Geography** either via mail, email, or with your application.
15. Submit a copy of a curriculum vitae or résumé to the **Department of Geography** either via mail, email, or with your application.

## Detailed Checklist for Masters Applicants

1. Read introduction and objectives of the Masters Program.

### **Geography Applicants**

*Source: Graduate Student Handbook, p. 19*

The Master's Program in Geography is intended to provide the student with: a) a general view of modern geography; b) the skills and methods necessary for geographic research; and c) the beginnings of specialization in one of the specialty fields of the department. Master's degree programs in the Department of Geography are by Plan A (thesis) or Plan B (research paper). The adviser will help with

selection of an appropriate plan. For the Master's Degree, the maximum time allowed will be four years from initial admission to the program. It is strongly recommended, however, that the Master's degree be completed no later than the end of the Spring quarter of the second year.

Unlike many Master's programs offered in geography, the program at Ohio State is designed to provide the student with an early exposure to a field of specialization. Of the four fields of specialization offered by the Department, the candidate will select one. Within that selected specialty the student must demonstrate scholarship and research potential to satisfy the requirements of the program. Generally, each specialty offers an introductory course at the 500 or 600 level, intermediate work at the 600 or 700 level and one or more substantive seminars at the 800 level. The substantive seminars provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate research capabilities. This capability should culminate in the Master's Thesis or Research Paper.

The student pursues the M.A. degree under the guidance of an adviser. The student must select his/her adviser by the eighth week of the winter quarter (first year) in order to be considered for continued funding. The advisory committee is encouraged to be selected one quarter after the selection of the adviser. In addition it is recommended that the committee and the student meet at the time of the formation of the committee, to discuss the student's academic plans. The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) acts as interim adviser until such a choice is made.

### **Atmospheric Science Applicants**

*Source: ASP Graduate Handbook, p. 12-13*

The Atmospheric Sciences Program at The Ohio State University was established in 1971 and is currently a separate graduate program in the Department of Geography with its own Graduate Studies Committee and program requirements. The Atmospheric Sciences Program offers Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. All Masters students will be required to complete courses in atmospheric thermodynamics, dynamics and radiation. These have prerequisites of courses in ordinary and partial differential equations and basic science sequences in physics and chemistry. However, the degree program is flexible and students may thereafter select from a variety of subfields for specialization in the atmospheric sciences and related areas. These include topics such as the dynamics of atmospheric systems (general circulation, hurricanes and tornadoes), urban and boundary layer meteorology, synoptic meteorology and climatic change. Students should choose a course of study in consultation with their adviser. It is expected that this course of study will fulfill all of the requirements listed in the Graduate School Handbook for the Master of Science degree.

The Master's degree program of the Atmospheric Sciences Program is designed to provide the student with: (a) a basic foundation in the physical principles which operate in the atmosphere (b) the skills and methods necessary to conduct basic research in the atmospheric sciences, and (c) a deeper understanding of the area of the atmospheric sciences which is the student's chosen area of specialization.

### **2. Examine descriptions, themes, and research associated with the four specializations.**

*Source: Departmental Webpage, New Version.*

<http://www.geography.ohio-state.edu/>

### **3. Review prerequisites for application to the graduate program.**

*Source: 2005-06 Information for Prospective Graduate Students, p. 3-4*

- **Completed a Bachelor's degree with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 for all collegiate work (A=4, B=3, C=2).** However, students with GPAs less than 3.00 may qualify for admission if other components of their records are strong. Ph.D. applicants must have a GPA of 3.00 in their Master's degree work.
- **All applicants must take the General Aptitude test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).** International applicants may take the GRE in their home countries.
- **A minimum of 40 quarter hours in geography** or its equivalent in closely allied fields.

Transfer students from other fields are accepted if a satisfactory program can be worked out which will rectify any background deficiencies.

- **GIS&SA Only: Mathematic coursework to the level of Integral Calculus.**
- **ASP Only: Mathematic coursework to the level of ordinary differential equations**
- **GIS&SA and ASP Only: Coursework in Computer Programming** (Recommended)

#### 4. Examine the core courses and expectations of the graduate program.

Source: *Graduate Student Handbook*, p. 14

Listed below are the procedures and the requirements of the Graduate School for earning a Master's Degree from The Ohio State University. For more information see Section II.5 of the Graduate School Handbook. (Accessible here: <http://www.gradsch.ohio-state.edu/Depo/PDF/Handbook/Handbook.pdf>)

1. Satisfactory completion of at least 45 quarter hours of graduate credit, within a period of four years. At least 36 of these credit hours must be at this university (ref. II.5.5). The maximum time allowed for the Master's degree program is four years from admission to the Master's program.
  2. Registration for at least 3 credit hours during the quarter in which graduation is expected.
  3. Satisfactory completion of the Department Core and TWO required methods courses, subject to minimum grade conditions:
    - a) Geography 607 or GIS proficiency
    - b) Two methods courses from an approved list, based on adviser's discretion.
  4. Submission of the "Application to Graduate - Master's Degree" form (page 16) to the Graduate School no later than the second Friday of that quarter in which graduation is expected (II.5.12.1).
  5. Achievement of a cumulative point-hour ratio of at least 3.0 in all courses taken for graduate credit (ref. II.4.1 and II.5.12.1).
  6. Satisfactory completion of the Master's Examination and completion of the Master's Examination Report form to the Graduate School and GSC chair no later than two weeks before commencement (ref. II.5.10. 7.1). The Master's Examination consists of a two-hour comprehensive oral examination (ref. II.5. 10. 5 and II. 5. 10, 6).
  7. Completion of a Master's Thesis/Paper approved by an advisory committee consisting of the graduate adviser and at least two members of the graduate faculty. A copy of the approved paper must be filed with the Department (ref. II.5. 11.2).
  8. Receipt of final grades in the Graduate School by the deadline published in the Master Schedule of Classes (ref. II.5.12.2). Students pursuing a Plan A (thesis option) submit the Thesis Approval form, the approved thesis, one abstract, and pay microfilming and binding fees (by check or money order only) at the Graduate School no later than one week before commencement.
5. Review possible sources of **financial assistance** for graduate school.

- **See Grad School Financial Aid Page:** <http://gradadmissions.osu.edu/BufferCosts.htm>
- **Also the Graduate School List of Funding Opportunities:**  
<http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/Category.aspx?Category=3&itemid=2>

6. Take careful note of **application deadlines**. Be sure to leave plenty of time for the processing of GRE and TOEFL scores. (These scores typically take **6-8 weeks** to process and **4-6 weeks** to register for the examination)

Source *New Webpage*.

**University Fellowship:**

- International Applicants: November 30
- Domestic Applicants: January 15

### **Departmental Associateships**

- January 15

### **General Deadlines for Graduate Applications, Autumn Quarter**

- International Applicants: July 1
- Domestic Applicants: August 15

\*\* For admissions during other quarters, please consult the Graduate School Website or contact the Department.

*It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all application materials reach the department in time; please call or write to the Graduate Studies Committee well before the November and January deadlines to ensure that we have received all the above materials, as incomplete applications will not be considered. The Graduate Studies Committee can be reached at 614-292-2514 or via e-mail at [kelsey.26@osu.edu](mailto:kelsey.26@osu.edu)*

### **Application Checklist**

7. Complete an **online application** for graduate school.  
[http://gradadmissions.osu.edu/apply\\_online.htm](http://gradadmissions.osu.edu/apply_online.htm)

8. Pay the \$40 **application fee** (\$50 for International applications).  
(Will be prompted at completion of application)

9. Order a practice examination booklet from the **GRE** (*optional*)

**See:** <http://www.gre.org>

Click on "Practice for GRE Test"

10. Make an appointment to take the **GRE Examination; arrange for scores to be sent to the Graduate Admissions Office and the Department of Geography.**

**See:** <http://www.gre.org>

When sending GRE scores to OSU, refer to school code **#1592**. The Department code is **#2203** for Geography and **#0501** for Atmospheric Sciences

11. **International Students Only:** Register for the TOEFL examination.

**See:** <http://www.toefl.org>

When sending TOEFL scores, refer to school code **#1592**. The Department code is **#70** for Geography and **#99** for Atmospheric Sciences

12. Submit one **official transcript** for each institution attended to the **Graduate Admissions Office AND the Department of Geography.**

**Download Form:** <http://admissions.osu.edu/apps/pdfs/g-tran.pdf>

For the second address on the form, please enter:  
Graduate Studies Committee  
Department of Geography

The Ohio State University  
1036 Derby Hall  
154 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1361

\*Be sure to include necessary payment to each institution.

**13. Arrange for three (3) letters of recommendation to be mailed OR submitted with the application to the Department of Geography.**

**If you want the letters of recommendations to be mailed download this Form and print 3 copies:**  
<http://admissions.osu.edu/apps/pdfs/refer.pdf>

If you choose to have the letter mailed please instruct references to mail letters to the following address:  
Graduate Studies Committee  
Department of Geography  
The Ohio State University  
1036 Derby Hall  
154 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1361

**14. Prepare a 2 page (1200 word maximum) statement of research interests and academic direction.** You can submit your statement with your application, email it to the Graduate Program Coordinator ([Kelsey.26@osu.edu](mailto:Kelsey.26@osu.edu)) or mail it to the below address.  
*Source: New Webpage*

\*Each year we look at a broad spectrum of graduate applications. An important part of the selection process is the statement of research interests and academic direction. This should spell out for as broad an audience as possible past and future research interests, as well as any relevant background information. The statement is of course going to look very different depending on whether you are applying for the MA or the PhD. In particular, we expect our PhD applicants to provide a much more detailed outline of their research trajectory and their anticipated research project.

In addition to clarifying your research interests, we expect you to select a faculty member, who you would most like to have as your initial graduate **Mentor**. You are strongly advised to email this faculty member and discuss your application before applying. This faculty member will play an important role in evaluating your application and, if you are accepted, would serve as your preliminary **mentor** (Graduate Students in our department always have an opportunity to change mentors or select more than one). To properly select a mentor go to the following link <http://www.geography.ohio-state.edu/our-department/faculty-and-staff> and select a Faculty member whose research mirrors your own interests. This does not mean that we only take students who study exactly what our faculty study - far from it! Indeed, our graduate students are versed in a wide range of disciplinary interests and go on to tackle a wide range of thesis and dissertation topics. However, we are attentive to the fact that a successful graduate career is in large measure dependent on the "fit" between graduate student and faculty research interests. As a result, we try very hard to match the most-qualified students in our application pool with our faculty's research interests. We strongly recommend that you contact relevant faculty prior to applying.

**Send this statement to:**

Graduate Studies Committee  
Department of Geography  
The Ohio State University  
1036 Derby Hall  
154 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1361

**15. Submit a copy of a curriculum vitae or résumé to the Department of Geography (only required for**

*applicants interested in departmental or teaching assistantships*). You can submit CV with your application, email it to the Graduate Program Coordinator or mail it to the below address.

**Send résumé or CV to:**

Graduate Studies Committee  
Department of Geography  
The Ohio State University  
1036 Derby Hall  
154 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1361