

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO GEOGRAPHY GRADUATE PROGRAM

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in our graduate program. Contained within this document are application material and information about our department.

The best way to get to know us is to start at our main webpage (<http://geography.ou.edu>) and click on those faculty members whose interests coincide with your own. You will find that nearly all our faculty have extensive pages describing their interests and work. If you think their interests are a good match for yours, I encourage you to begin corresponding with some of them, ideally by e-mail.

If you wish to apply to one of our graduate programs, you need to complete the accompanying Graduate College application and send it directly to the address indicated; this in turn will be forwarded to us. (Note that the College requires an official copy of all your transcripts and that international students must score at least 575 points on the TOEFL examination.) Second, you should complete the enclosed Department of Geography application form, including a carefully prepared statement describing your academic objectives and particular interests in geography. In addition to the departmental application and your statement of interests we will need three letters of recommendation. We also welcome but do not require GRE scores.

We do not have annual application deadlines, but if you wish to be considered for a teaching assistantship, you should apply by February 1 for an August appointment. We offer several teaching and research assistantships each year, with packages ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually for up to four years, plus tuition waivers. Questions about funding or assistance with the application procedure can be addressed to Dr. Sally Gros, our Graduate Liaison at sgros@ou.edu or (405)325-5325.

The Great Plains are a fascinating place for geographers, whether they're interested in biogeography, climatology, agriculture, energy and water resources, regional studies, geotechniques or many other geographic specialties. We have a young faculty, with lots of energy and talent, and graduate students with diverse interests and backgrounds. We're responsive to student needs such as travel to conferences and research funding.

Again, thank you for contacting us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Bret Wallach
Professor and Chair
Bwallach@ou.edu

RETURN THE FOLLOWING TO:

**Graduate Admissions Committee
Department of Geography
100 East Boyd Street, SEC 684
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019-1007**

1. Completed *Application for Admission to Geography Graduate Program*
2. Statement of Interests in pursuing a graduate degree in the Department of Geography at OU
3. Three letters of recommendation
4. Brief Resumé or Vitae including degrees earned, dates, GPAs, title of thesis, and any other education or professional information that would assist your application. Copies of sample writing are welcome.
5. Copies of transcripts for all previous university work (photocopies acceptable)
6. Copy of your GRE report (optional)
7. International applicants C copy of TOEFL report with minimum score of **575**

RETURN THE FOLLOWING TO:

**Office of Admissions and Records
1000 Asp Ave.
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019-0430**

1. Completed [University of Oklahoma Application for Admissions](#)
2. Application fee: **\$25.00** U.S. citizens; **\$50.00** International applicants
3. **Official** transcripts for all previous university work
4. International applicants – completed [Confidential Financial Statement](#) & **official** TOEFL report

The above applications and materials should be received by the University of Oklahoma before **June 1** to be considered for the following fall semester, or by **December 1** for the following spring semester. Request for a graduate assistantship must be received by **February 15** to be considered for the fall semester.

The next page is the Application for Admission to the Department of Geography. Following the application is brief summary of our department. More detailed information about the department, its faculty and courses can be found within the website: <http://geography.ou.edu>. To access the Graduate College Application of Admission, click on the links associated with the material above, or visit <http://www.ou.edu/admrec/grad.htm> for more Graduate College information.

Application for Admission to Geography Graduate Program

DEGREE PROGRAM (check one): M.A. _____ Ph.D. _____

APPLICATION FOR (check one): FALL _____ SPRING _____ semester, 19____.

Do you wish to be considered for a teaching or research assistantship? YES _____ NO _____

NAME: _____
LAST FIRST MIDDLE

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____

PRESENT ADDRESS: _____

HOME TELEPHONE: _____ WORK/SCHOOL TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

LAST UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE ATTENDED: _____

MAJOR: _____

DEGREE RECEIVED: _____

PROPOSED AREA(S) OF SPECIALIZATION AT OU: _____

ATTACH A STATEMENT OF INTERESTS IN PURSUING A GRADUATE DEGREE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, AND A RESUMÉ OR VITAE.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Department of Geography

Bret Wallach, Chair and Graduate Liaison

Sarkeys Energy Center (SEC), Suite 684
Norman, OK 73019-1007
Phone: (405) 325-5325
Fax: (405) 325-6090

Internet: <http://geography.ou.edu>

e-mail: bwallach@ou.edu

Faculty Roster

Professors Nostrand, Spaeth, Wallach, T. Williams; Associate Professors Rundstrom, Yuan; Assistant Professors Bridge, Greene, Hoagland, Offen, Tarhule, Wood; Lecturers Gros, Tarhule-Lips; Adjunct Professor Kessler; Adjunct Associate Professors Fink, Marshment.

Degrees Offered

- Bachelor of Arts in Geography
- Bachelor of Science in Geography
- Masters of Arts
- Doctor of Philosophy

General Information

Geography is one of the oldest organized fields of study. Natural curiosity and a desire to seek resources prompted early people to migrate across land and oceans. As knowledge of the world and its people grew, so too did the discipline of geography. The known world was mapped, and cartography developed as a specialized profession highly dependent on mathematics. Continued exploration produced information that was synthesized, and the world was defined and interpreted by geographers.

Modern geography continues to analyze global environments and the role of human life in these systems. The study of the interaction of physical and biological systems with social systems forms a central focus for many geographers. No other scholarly field addresses the interplay between patterns of human activity and the Earth's climates, landforms, vegetation and soils. In the sense, geography is a field of extraordinary breadth, which attempts to understand connections among the dynamic systems operating on the surface of the Earth.

Modern technologies that allow the collection of geographic information from maneuverable or fixed orbital air and spacecraft provide today's geographer with holistic perspectives of the Earth at frequent intervals in time. Devices to store and analyze these data have given the geographer means to study a wide array of physical and human phenomena across the entire Earth surface. Rhythms in the Earth's ocean and atmosphere and their impact on continents and islands can be examined. Optimum use of the Earth's lands and seas can be analyzed. The evolution of patterns of all kinds can be studied.

Programs for Academic Excellence

The department currently works across the broad spectrum of geography. On the physical side, faculty are presently conducting research in hydrology, global and tropical climatology, and biogeography. On the human side, faculty are working in cultural and historical studies bearing primarily on economic and natural resource development, land use, and cross-cultural contacts. In techniques, active research interests of the faculty include geographical information systems (GIS), quantitative methods, statistical climatology, and remote sensing. Between them, the faculty are currently working in many geographical areas, including the United States, Canada, Eastern Europe, West Africa, the Middle East, and South and East Asia.

Special Facilities and Programs

Department offices are housed primarily on the fourth and sixth floors of Sarkeys Energy Center, while laboratories are located on the first floor of the same building. Among those laboratories is a GIS complex which includes PC's, Sun workstations and assorted peripherals such as digitizers, printers, and plotters. Some of the available software includes ERDAS, ARC/INFO, ArcView. The department also has laboratories for physical geography, cartography, air-photo interpretation, and remote sensing.

University resources include the Bizzell Memorial Library which has an extensive collection of journals and books on geography, a large collection of maps and aerial photographs, and special collections in Western History, the History of Science, and the Geosciences.

Scholarships

The Ralph E. Olson and Margaret Olson Scholarship Fund provides awards to students who have attained high achievement in the field of geography. Undergraduate geography majors are eligible after completion of the junior year. The Clyde Bollinger Award provides awards to graduating seniors who demonstrate outstanding scholarship and enthusiasm for geography.

Graduate Study

Admission Requirements

In addition to meeting the requirements of the Graduate College, students seeking admission to the geography program must have an undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.00, be able to define the goals and objectives for their degree program, and submit at least three letters of recommendation. The department encourages the submission of results from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) as additional evidence of promise, but they are not required for admission and no minimum score is required. Students who have deficiencies in their academic background can be admitted conditionally at the discretion of the department.

Master of Arts

The M.A. degree certifies that a student has a professional grasp of the concepts and techniques of geography and has demonstrated competence and originality in their use.

The M.A. degree requires a total of 30 hours of graduate credit, with at least a B average. Specific coursework requirements include: satisfactory completion of Contemporary Geographical Thought (6973); three three-credit hour research seminars or graduate courses, one field course, and a minimum of four hours and no more than six hours of thesis credit. In addition, the student will:

- a. Present a thesis acceptable to the advisory committee.
- b. Satisfactorily complete an oral examination.

No student may be examined orally more than once.

Only after the advisory committee agrees that the thesis is essentially complete will the oral examination be scheduled.

In order to assure that an M.A. program is completed without undue delay, the evaluation process must be successfully completed before the student has completed more than 42 credit hours of graduate coursework. Courses beyond this total can be counted toward a Ph.D. degree only if the student has completed the M.A. degree or its equivalent.

Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. degree certifies that a student has mastered a significant body of geographical knowledge and has demonstrated a high degree of professional competence as a geographer by making an important, original contribution to knowledge. The Ph.D. requires:

- a. a total of at least 90 semester hours of graduate credit;

- b. successful completion of Contemporary Geographical Thought (6973), or graduate courses, and three three-credit hour seminars or graduate courses, and one field course;
- c. the demonstration of an acceptable level of competence in two areas of specialization; and ,
- d. the completion of an acceptable written dissertation followed by an oral defense of that dissertation.

All Ph.D. students must identify and advisory committee which will consist of the adviser and four other faculty member, one of whom must be from a discipline other than geography. The committee must be approved by the Department faculty, upon the recommendation of the adviser and student.

Each student will develop and declare primary and secondary areas of specialization that are acceptable to the advisory committee. Students are expected to declare provisional specialties, in consultations with the advisory committee, by the end of the second semester of residence in the Ph.D. program. Coursework requirements in connection with this specialty, as well as with the cognate field, are determined by the student and the advisory committee in a formal conference held before the end of the first year of residence.

Each student must select a cognate field or discipline related to his or her area of specialization. A cognate field will normally consist of at least nine hours of courses in more than one discipline. The advisory committee must approve both the cognate field and the courses which fulfill this requirement.

The readiness of a student to proceed with dissertation research will be evaluated by written and oral examinations. These will be administered by an examining committee of at least four faculty members from geography, one of whom will be the student's adviser, and one faculty member from outside the discipline. The written portion of the examination will cover the degree specializations and cognate field. The examination will be prepared by the adviser form questions suggested by members of the examining committee. The oral examination will consist of follow-up questions related to the written portion, and the student's knowledge of geographic thought and methodology. Satisfactory completion of the written and oral portions of the general examination is followed by formal certification of candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

After taking the general examination, a formal dissertation proposal must be presented in a meeting open to the geography faculty and graduate student body. If the proposal is judged to be inappropriate or in need of additional work, a second presentation may be required. It is the responsibility of the adviser to determine the consensus of the committee to authorize the student to proceed with the dissertation. No formal vote of approval shall be required of the faculty as a whole, but the proposal must have the sanction of all members of the dissertation committee.

Before the presentation of the proposal, the following procedure will be employed:

- a. the membership of the dissertation committee shall be established;
- b. the time and place of the presentation shall be adequately publicized, including a written announcement to the geography faculty, and,
- c. a written statement of the proposal shall be given to each member of the dissertation committee and to the remaining members of the faculty.

The final requirement is the preparation and oral defense of a Ph.D. dissertation, which must be a major piece of research recognized by the dissertation committee as a significant contribution to knowledge. The dissertation committee must consist of at least five faculty members (except by petition to and approval by the faculty); three or more of them must be geographers and at least two of them, including the adviser, must be on the geography graduate faculty of the University of Oklahoma. Members of the advisory committee will normally remain as members of the examination and dissertation committees. All changes in committee membership must be forwarded to the Graduate College for approval at least 30 days prior to defense of the dissertation.

After advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, a student is expected to submit a dissertation manuscript within four years. After this time, at the discretion of the Department of Geography faculty, the student may be required to repeat the general examinations and/or to resubmit a dissertation proposal as a condition for remaining a degree candidate. As long as there is clear evidence that a student is making progress and is keeping up-to-date professionally, the four-year time period may be extended on recommendation of the dissertation committee. Experience shows, however, that long delays tend to increase the likelihood of problems in completing a dissertation.

The final defense of the dissertation will be scheduled only after the committee has agreed to approve the draft as nearly complete. Procedures for this defense shall follow those outlined by the Graduate College. Major points of conflict regarding substance or style should be resolved before the final defense. However, minor additions and revisions may be expected after the defense.