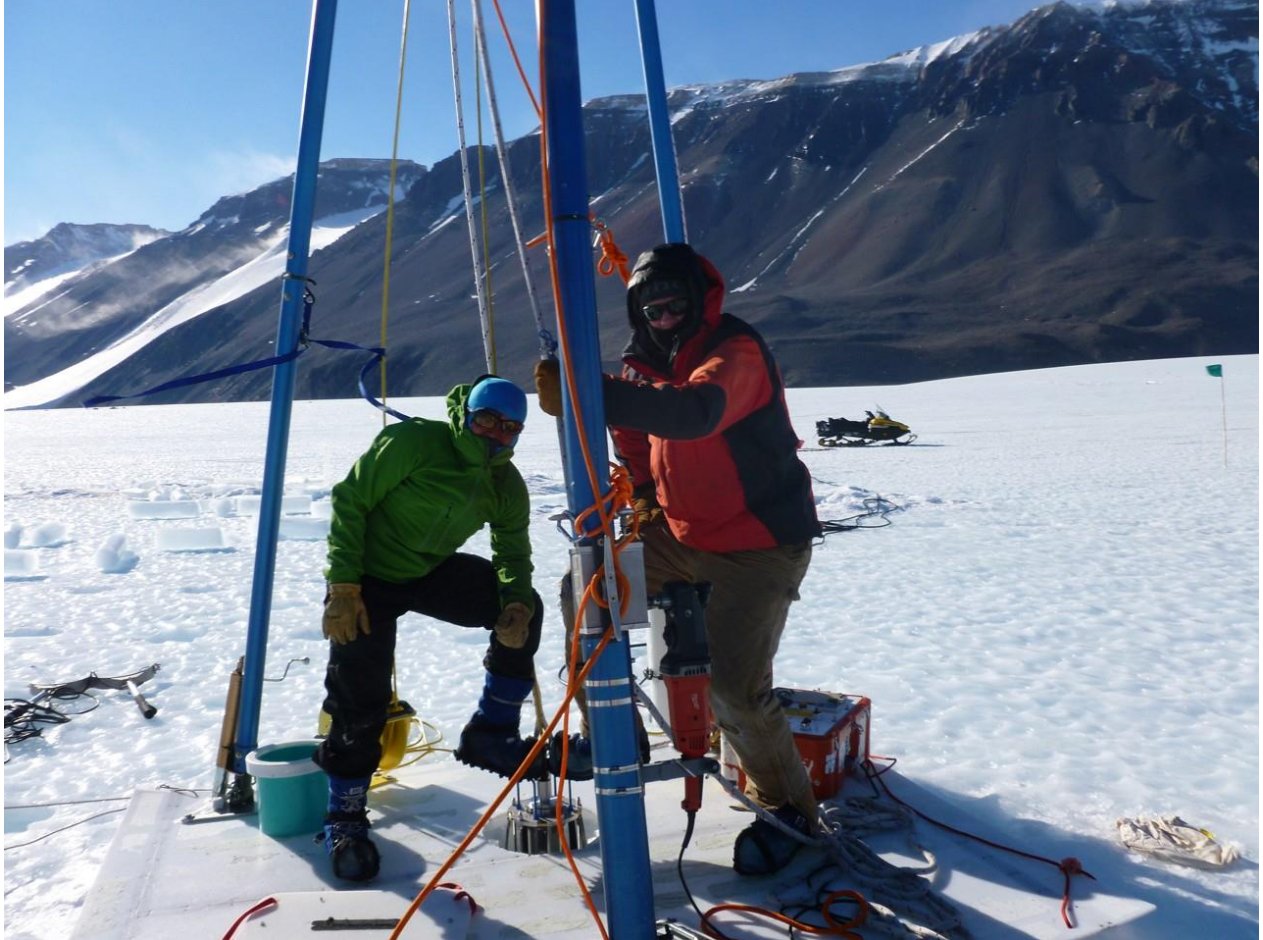


THE GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025 - 26

FACTS, INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS



UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

DEPARTMENT OF EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

**227 Hutchison Hall
Rochester, New York 14627
(585) 275-5713
ees@ur.rochester.edu
<https://www.sas.rochester.edu/ees/>**

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WELCOME TO EES!

Welcome to all incoming graduate students, and welcome back to all of you who have been here before. The purpose of this handbook (which is updated every summer) is to provide you with answers to some of the more commonly asked questions; to inform you of common deadlines and fees; and to lead you through the department's requirements for MS and PhD students. We hope that you will find this handbook useful as a guide and reference.

The Graduate Advisors

For the Department:

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Professor Vasilii Petrenko (until 12/31/25)

Location: Hutchison Hall 228

Phone: (585) 276-6094

Email: vasilii.petrenko@rochester.edu

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Professor Thomas Weber (beginning 1/1/26)

Location: Hutchison Hall

Phone:

Email: t.weber@rochester.edu

Programs Coordinator: Erin Cabrera

Location: Hutchison Hall 227F

Phone: (585) 275-2283

Email: ecabrer4@UR.Rochester.edu

For SAS; Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA):

Dean of Graduate Studies: Nick Vamivakas - nick.vamivakas@rochester.edu

Associate Director of Academic Affairs: Leanne Temp – leanne.temp@rochester.edu

Location: Lattimore 206

Phone: (585) 275-4153

Email: ASEGEPA@rochester.edu

For the University:

University Dean of Graduate Studies: Richard Libby

Manager of the Office of Graduate Studies: Gretchen Briscoe

Email: gretchen.briscoe@rochester.edu

Location: Wallis 259

Arrival and Orientation

Departmental

New students should set up a brief meeting with the department programs coordinator when they first arrive in the department. New students will also have an opportunity to meet with the director of graduate studies at the beginning of their first semester.

GEPA

The Office of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs hosts an orientation, with online and in-person

components, for incoming graduate students. The orientation program is designed to introduce you to our graduate education team and current students, and to inform you of important policies and available resources at the University. While most programming is optional, please note that there will be required trainings to complete.

The University's learning management system, Blackboard, will be used to house online trainings and information sessions, along with links to important documents and University websites. **You will receive an email in early August letting you know to access the online orientation in Blackboard.** Additional programming may be announced prior to the start of the fall semester.

General advice for getting started with your graduate program.

We don't expect first-year students to come here with a defined research plan, although some do. Your first two semesters here provide some opportunity to explore your interests and plans. The goal is for you, in consultation with your advisors, to devise course and research programs which are feasible and fit your own talents and aspirations. It is primarily your responsibility to consult with your primary advisor and develop a suitable program within the basic departmental guidelines described in this handbook.

Try to determine your initial advising committee (this can change later) by the end of your second semester. These faculty members (three to four from within the department) will, in the case of PhD candidates, conduct your qualifying exam, or for the Masters (two to three from within the department) will be your defense committee or those responsible for reading your essay. One of these faculty members should be your thesis advisor and will be the primary person guiding your research. Meet with your thesis advisor regularly and keep them informed about your progress. This person will also guide you through your course work requirements. But we encourage all students to become acquainted with as many of the faculty members as possible during their first two semesters in residence.

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICAL MATTERS

Net ID / URAD

This is needed to access University online services such as registration, health insurance information and payroll information, and can be obtained through the [University IT's NETID page](#). You will need your employee ID number (from your paycheck) or your student ID number. Contact the Information Technology Services Center (ITS) if you have any problems getting this set up. Their phone number is (585) 275-2000 and their email address is univithelp@rochester.edu.

Student ID Card

There are three locations that you can go to get your ID card:

- The Department of Public Safety office
612 Wilson Boulevard
Hours: Monday – Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Susan B Anthony Hall
Room 114A
Hours: Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Medical Center Office
Room G-7009
Hours: Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Upon the beginning of your sixth year, your ID card becomes “deactivated”. In order for you to access facilities, such as the athletic center, you will need to go to the ID card Office to extend your graduation date.

Registration

The University’s registration and related deadlines for the new academic year are posted in the main office or online at the [registrar’s website](#).

Registration will be conducted in the [UR Student system](#). You will need your net ID and password to access this site. Students can register on-line for most courses except for Reading courses. **All students should consult with their advisors before completing their online registration.** Remember that you must register before the deadline (9/9/24) even if your schedule is not finalized (or you will be fined \$160 for late registration). This is especially important for our international students because it can affect their visa status. “Adds” and “Drops” can be made during the early weeks of all semesters.

Health Insurance

All students must have health insurance coverage –either the Student Health Plan through the University or their own coverage. **All students must document their choice each year.** The University has expanded single-payer health insurance coverage to all full-time PhD students across our institution. Full-time PhD students are eligible for university supported coverage if they are:

- Currently enrolled at the University and are within the first six years of study
- Fully supported by fellowships, grants, or other appointments
- Making satisfactory progress in their academic program

The full-time PhD single-payer student health insurance is administered through **University Health Service (UHS)**. For more information, UHS and the University Office of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs have developed a list of **frequently asked questions**. If you have health insurance questions that are not included or answered in the FAQ, please contact UHS. If you have eligibility questions that are not included in the FAQ, please contact Erin Cabrera.

In addition to required health insurance coverage, there is also a Mandatory Health Fee that is required for all students. This covers primary care at the University Health Service (UHS) and a few additional services affiliated with UHS. Students can ask Erin Cabrera for details.

Emergency or Temporary Closings and Other Changes in Class Schedules and University Operations

The University plans to commence and conclude classes on the dates indicated in the academic calendars. But unforeseen circumstances or events may occur that require the University to temporarily close or otherwise make adjustments to its student life, residential housing, class schedules and format, method and location of instruction, educational activities, and operations because of reasons beyond the University's control. For example, such circumstances or events may include but are not limited to inclement weather, the onset of public health crises, being subject to government order(s), significant safety or security concerns, faculty illness, strikes, labor disturbances, sabotage, terrorism, war, riot, civil unrest, fire, flood, earthquake, acts of God, malfunction of University equipment (including computers), cyberattacks, unavailability of particular University facilities occasioned by damage to the premises, repairs or other causes, as well as disruption/unavailability of utilities, labor, energy, materials, transportation, electricity, security, or the internet. If any of these or other unforeseen circumstances or events outside of the University's control occur, the University will respond as necessary and appropriate, and it assumes no liability for any interruption or adjustments made to student life, residential housing, class schedules and format, method and location of instruction, educational activities, and operations caused by these or other unforeseen circumstances or events. And the University shall not be responsible for the refund of any tuition or fees in the event of any such unforeseen circumstances or events, except as may otherwise be expressly provided in the University's Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policy or its published tuition refund schedule ([Payments and Refunds - Office of the Bursar \(rochester.edu\)](#)).

Student Stipends, Tuition Waivers, Credit Hours And Taxes, University Support Resources

Student Stipends

Financial assistance in the form of stipends is allocated on a yearly basis, with separate support for the academic year and the summer months. The department is committed to supporting PhD students for a period of 5 years, provided that students are in good academic standing and make good progress in their research and with the required program milestones. Support beyond five years is at the discretion of the primary research advisor. PhD students are typically supported as teaching assistants during some semesters, usually during the first two years of their residence here. Support for the following years and for any summer months generally comes from research grants, administered by the student's research advisor.

Tuition Waivers and Credit Hours

PhD students: All full-time PhD students should register for a minimum of 9 and no more than 12 credit hours if they are a teaching or research assistant. If your tuition waiver says 12 credit hours, you must not register for more than 12 credits, or you will be responsible for the cost of the additional credits. Ph.D. candidates will, when possible, receive tuition waivers for no more than 90 credit hours total (90 is also the number of credit hours required for completion of the PhD degree). The recommended strategy for PhD students is to register for 9 credits per semester, which allows a 90-credit tuition waiver to last for 5 years. These credits can be made up from some combination of formal coursework, research credits (such as EESC 595), and the required department seminar, EESC 499 (1 credit per semester). **After reaching the 90-credit limit, PhD candidates are charged a continuation fee (presently about \$1,070 per semester) to maintain their full-time enrollment.** The student's research advisor may choose to pay the continuation fee for the student, depending on availability of funds.

Of the required 90 credit hours, no more than 30 credit hours may be accepted as transfer credit (on approval of the associate dean of graduate studies) for work previously taken at the University of Rochester or at another university. If you transfer credits to satisfy Ph.D. requirements, your tuition waiver is reduced by an equivalent number of credit hours (i.e. you no longer have 90 hours of tuition waiver) [per University Regulations].

MS students can, in some cases, receive partial to full tuition waivers. First year MS students often serve as teaching assistants as part of their departmental degree requirements; however, MS students do not receive stipends as teaching assistants. But they can be supported as research assistants if their advisor has such funds available.

Summer school courses are not covered by tuition waiver unless prior approval of the Associate Dean has been granted. Students covered by a partial tuition waiver will receive that percentage of tuition coverage for the number of credits in which they are enrolled, up to a maximum of 12 credits for PhD students (16 credits for M.S. students). For example, if you are granted a 75% tuition waiver for 12 credit hours, you will pay 25% of the tuition up to 12 credit hours and 100% of the tuition above 12 credit hours.

Payroll, Taxes and Forms

Teaching and research assistantship income is taxable (a W-4 form has to be filed at the Payroll Office). The W-4 for can be accessed through Workday/URStudent in the menu under "benefits and pay". For non-resident aliens, an online tax compliance system known as "SPRINTAX" has been implemented to help expedite filing of tax related paperwork. New international students will automatically be enrolled in the system. They will receive an email from noreply@sprintax.com when they arrive on campus

explaining the SPRINTAX system and which will contain a passcode that they can use to access the system. Once the passcode and instructions are received, the student can enter information and update it as needed (for example, when your funding changes). Failure to provide adequate information could result in taxes being withheld at the maximum withholding rate. To contact a UR Nonresident Alien Tax Specialist for assistance or questions, send an email to info@sprintax.com or call the International Student Office at (585) 275-2866 or the Payroll Office at (585) 275-2040.

Direct deposit to your savings/checking accounts in local banks is also available. This can be done on-line with your Payroll Net ID by going to [myURHR system](#) at and clicking on log into Workday in the middle of the page..

Every student must also sign an “Intellectual Property Agreement”.

Financial Aid

The University provides only a limited amount of funds for graduate stipends. The rest of the graduate student support comes from research grants. If you are supported on a research grant, make sure that you and your advisor are clear about the work you are doing; the grant and your future support depend on it. Do not take financial support for granted; it is limited and only guaranteed for one year at a time. While there is very little that you can do to change the situation regarding university funds, there are several things that you can and should do to help us with the funding for your research.

Other Financial Assistance

Scholarships and awards are offered to graduate students by various federal and private organizations. Some helpful web sites are <https://studentaid.gov> and our own [University Financial Aid website](#). Information is also available in the College Dean’s office in Lattimore 218.

The University is now offering a childcare benefit for PhD students. Please check with Erin Cabrera or the [SAS and Hajim GEPA Office](#) for more details.

Research Grants for Graduate Projects

There are several sources of funding available to you that you can apply for. The list below is not exhaustive – you should check with your advisor about options. Having your own funding helps to ensure that you have reliable financial support during your PhD, provides a higher measure of independence in your research, and is a great accomplishment to be able to put on your CV.

1. NSF graduate research fellowships (for US citizens only). Application materials can be downloaded from the NSF website at <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>
2. Sigma Xi Grants-in-Aid of Research – deadlines – March 15 and October 15. Applications can be downloaded from the Sigma Xi website at <https://www.sigmaxi.org/programs/grants-in-aid-of-research>

3. Geological Society of America Research Grants – deadline February 1. Applications can be downloaded from the GSA website at [GSA Grad Student Research Grants \(geosociety.org\)](https://www.geosociety.org)

The University also maintains a [searchable database of Fellowships](#).

If you are applying, you will need recommendation letters from more than one faculty member. Get your proposal and other necessary forms to the appropriate faculty members **at least 2 weeks before the deadline** – don't expect them to write letters for you on short notice!

Student Support

Students in need of support are encouraged to speak with their advisor or the department's graduate coordinator.

In cases where the students feel they need to talk to someone/get advice from outside of the department, the students should consider reaching out to a [University ombudsperson](#).

[SAS and Hajim Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs \(GEPA\) Office](#) is able to provide a range of support (see Page 3 for contact info). Katie Ferruzza (k.ferruzza@rochester.edu) is the person at GEPA who is specifically responsible for student support.

Students can also refer themselves and others to the [CARE Network](#), an office dedicated to helping students understand what type of support they need and connecting them with the appropriate campus resource.

In addition, the [University Counseling Center \(UCC\)](#) provides individualized and group treatment to students with mental health and well-being concerns. Their services are free for full-time students who pay the mandatory health fee. To schedule an appointment, call (585) 275-3113, once the appointment is scheduled the center is on the second floor of the University Health Service building located at 738 Library Road on the River Campus; online appointments are also available.

If you experience harassment or discrimination, please contact your supervisor (or the DGS or department chair if the behavior is coming from the supervisor). The supervisor in this case would reach out to the University Title IX Office for assistance.

If you need support with a disability, please reach out to the [University Office of Disability Resources](#).

Emergency Contacts

Call the Department of Public Safety at (585) 275-3333 or by picking up a direct dial Blue Light Emergency Phone on campus. For mental health emergencies, call Public Safety or the UCC 24/7 on-call professional at (585) 275-3113.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS – PhD CANDIDATES

Brief Overview of PhD Degree Requirements and Milestones

The Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences offers the degree of doctor of philosophy (PhD) in geosciences. For the PhD degree, University regulations require **90 hours** of credit for students coming in with a bachelor's degree. We expect that \approx **36 hours** of these 90 hours are taken up with formal course work, with the remainder coming from PhD research credits (mainly EESC 595: PhD Research). For students entering with an approved master's degree and transferring credit (up to **30 hours**) from this degree, the pertinent figures are at least **60 hours** of total credit including approximately **24 hours** of formal course credit. Because the course work provides a foundation for your research, we expect most of the course work to be finished in the first two years.

Near the end of the first year of your PhD program, you are expected to submit a brief **first year research progress report** (more details in following sections).

Serving as a **graduate teaching assistant (TA)** is another important part of our PhD program. You are required to serve as a TA for at least one semester, although most students do more.

The **Qualifying Examination** is a key milestone in the PhD program. This examination typically takes place during your 5th semester in the program and involves writing a research proposal that is submitted to your exam committee, followed by an oral exam during which you present and defend the merits of your research proposal to the committee and also answer general scientific knowledge questions in areas broadly related to your topic of research. Once you pass the exam, you will be promoted to the status of "PhD Candidate". Depending on transfer credit/credit hours, a MS in geological sciences is also awarded. Full details on this exam are given in the sections below.

During your time as a PhD candidate, you will be guided by a new advising committee, which by now will also include a faculty member from another department or an expert in your field from outside the University. Once your research is completed and the results reported in your dissertation (to the satisfaction of the committee) the **Final PhD Examination (PhD defense)** is the only step left between you and the PhD degree. This examination consists of an oral presentation of your research – open to the public – which is followed by a closed oral examination administered by a faculty committee that is selected by you and your advisor and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies, usually your advising committee plus an outside chairperson.

A PhD thesis is generally expected to amount to about three publishable research articles and must consist of work performed while in the program at EES. Students are required to have at least one peer-reviewed research article published and another submitted by the time of their defense (see below for more detail on this requirement).

First Year Curriculum and Evaluation for PhD Students

In general, first-year PhD students should be registering for 9 credits per academic semester (same as for students beyond their first year). First year curriculum should be determined in close consultation with the primary research advisor.

First-year students must register for a first-year research course (EESC 505) in one of the semesters during their first year. The purpose of this course is to help ensure that PhD students get a good start on their PhD research during their first year. It is recommended that this course is taken for 4 credits, although taking it for 1 credit is acceptable. For the purposes of credit accounting, if registering for 1 credit, this could take the place of either EESC 490 (Supervised teaching; note that students can still TA / receive TAship even if they are not registered for this) or EESC 499 (Research Frontiers — our department seminar; students are still required to attend the seminars). The structure of this research course and associated evaluation is determined by the student's research supervisor. The course will be graded on an A – E scale.

It is recommended, but not required that first year students reserve at least one semester of TAing until a later year (i.e., we recommend that you do not TA both semesters in your first year, but rather leave at least some of your TAing until later years). This allows for more research time in the first year, and also ultimately provides a more qualified TA pool that would be better able to support advanced courses.

First-year students must submit a brief research report by August 15 (prior to the start of their third semester), which will summarize their research objectives and progress over the first year, as well as briefly describe the proposed research going forward. The report must contain no more than 1-page of single-spaced text (Arial 11 font or another similarly sized font), plus any references. The report may also include one figure or table if needed. The report should be prepared in close consultation with the student's primary advisor and submitted to the Programs Coordinator (Erin Cabrera) and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS; Vas Petrenko).

A faculty review committee, consisting of the DGS, Department Chair, and all advisors of first-year PhD students will meet near the end of August to review the performance of each first-year student, taking into consideration course performance as well as research performance based on the annual evaluation form, research course grade and the 1-page report. The committee will use a rubric (attached at the end of this handbook) to evaluate student performance, with possible outcomes being “good” (way to go, no significant problems), “satisfactory” (meeting most expectations, but improvement needed in some areas; feedback would be provided to the student), and “unsatisfactory” (not meeting expectations, significant problems, student would be placed on academic probation).

FORMAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. PREREQUISITES:

You are expected to have taken the following courses as an undergraduate:

- Two semesters of calculus
- Differential equations, statistics, or linear algebra
- Two semesters of physics
- Three semesters of chemistry

Students entering the PhD program with a focus on Geology are expected to have completed a program equivalent to a BS in Geology from the University of Rochester. This would include courses in:

- Physical geology
- Historical geology
- Mineralogy (including optical mineralogy)
- Sedimentology and stratigraphy
- Structural geology

- Three elective (upper level) courses e.g., geochemistry, geophysics, petrology, paleontology or paleomagnetism

Credit Policy with respect to Undergraduate Courses

If you have not had the above courses, the sooner you take them the better. Note that graduate students cannot take 100-level courses for credit. However, one 100-level or 200-level course can be taken as a **bridging course** with the permission of the Associate Dean; bridging courses are covered by your tuition waiver, but do not count toward your total required 90 hours of graduate credits. Any additional 200-level course that is taken as part of a graduate curriculum must be certified by the instructor to have some content at the graduate level; such 200-level courses, when permitted, carry the usual 4 credit hours. There is also a limit of two 200-level courses that can be taken within the normal course of a graduate student curriculum. 100 or 200-level courses that you need as background can also sometimes be audited with permission from the instructor. Talk to your primary advisor and the department graduate advisor to work out a program.

II. GRADUATE COURSES FOR PhD STUDENTS

PhD students are expected to complete ≈ 9 formal graduate courses (≈ 36 credit hours; less if transferring approved graduate courses in from a prior program you completed). Most of these courses should be completed in the first 2 years. The course plan should be put together by the student in close consultation with his/her primary advisor and possibly the advising committee. The graduate coursework serves to provide a useful foundation for your research, prepare you for the qualifying exams and to broaden your knowledge and perspective within the Earth Sciences.

You are expected to earn A's and B's in all your course work. Grades below B- are **not** considered satisfactory. Incompletes (I) are not looked upon favorably either. Two grades of "C+" or lower can result in dismissal from the program. Failure to pass (i.e., B- or higher) at least 9 credits/semester can lead to probation/dismissal.

As part of their coursework, students must complete one 2-4 course sequence in their area of specialty; course selection should be done in consultation with the research advisor. We also expect that one of your graduate courses within the department will be in a field that is unrelated to your field of research interest. This is meant to broaden your horizons and introduce you to a field of research that is completely different from your own. Students may also take graduate-level courses that are relevant to their research direction in departments other than EES, with agreement from the student's research advisor. For a full list of EES graduate courses, please see the EES department website.

PhD students who would like to transfer credits from a previously awarded Master's degree may do so with permission of the department and approval from the University. A maximum of 30 credits may be transferred. Please keep in mind, transferring credits goes against your 90-credit tuition waiver. Such that, if you transfer in 30 credits, you will only have 60 credits left of your tuition waiver. This shortens the number of semesters your tuition will be waived and hastens the need for payment of a Continuing Enrollment fee. Depending on the number of credits transferred, may also affect your ability to earn a Master's degree upon the successful completion of your Qualifying Examination. This is determined on an individual basis. If this is a concern, please discuss with Erin Cabrera.

The decision to transfer credits must be made by the end of your first academic year. If you are interested in doing so, please discuss this option with your advisor and Erin Cabrera.

TEACHING REQUIREMENT

All PhD students are required to serve as TAs in the department for at least one semester, although typically students do two or more semesters. Students who are TAs should register for EESC 490 (Supervised College Teaching: 1 credit) for at least 1 semester and no more than 2 semesters. Note that you can still be a TA for a course without registering for EESC 490 if you are serving as a TA for more than one or two semesters. Graduate TA assignments are finalized in August for the fall semester, and in December for the spring semester. Students are encouraged to reserve their second semester of TAing until after their first year, to allow more time for research in the first year and also to allow them to gain the expertise to TA more advanced courses. The approximate time commitment expected from graduate TAs is 10 hours/week on average over the duration of the academic semester.

ATTENDANCE OF DEPARTMENTAL SEMINARS

Students should register for EESC 499 (Research Frontiers in Geosciences, which is the departmental seminar) for 1 credit every semester when they are not registered for EESC 490 (TAs) or EESC 505 (First-Year PhD Research) for 1 credit. The departmental seminar series is comprised of invited speakers from other institutions as well as talks from members of the department, including students, and is a great opportunity to broaden your knowledge in the Geosciences. The [seminar schedule](#) is posted every semester on the department website under News & Events.

Students are expected to block off the regular seminar time in their schedules and attend every week. At the absolute minimum, students must attend 75% of the seminars each semester (whether or not you are registered for EESC 499) unless you have been given explicit permission to attend less from the Director of Graduate Studies. Examples of cases when permission to attend less than 75% of seminars may be granted include but are not limited to long field expeditions, extended visits to labs, and extended illnesses. Absences related to events such as a short conference, a brief illness or appointment are expected to fit within the 25% of seminars you can miss. An email will be sent out at the beginning of each semester by the Programs Coordinator to inform students of the number of seminars that they will need to attend for the semester. If you expect that 75% attendance may be challenging for you in a given semester due to planned research travel, for example, please reach out by email to your advisor, the DGS and the Programs Coordinator.

A written warning will be issued after the first semester of not meeting the 75% attendance requirement. A repeat failure to meet this requirement will result in academic probation.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Students are expected to be in residence at UR during their PhD's. In special cases, students can request a waiver of this requirement, which needs to be approved by the student's thesis committee and DGS.

PhD QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

All PhD students are required to complete their qualifying examination before the end of the 5th semester in residence. The main objectives of the qualifying examination are as follows:

- Ensure that the student has been making good progress in their research.
- Ensure that the student has a well-designed plan for a project that is scientifically compelling and feasible.
- Ensure that the student has a good level of general background knowledge in their field.

The exam is to be administered by a committee of three faculty, and it is the student's responsibility to form the committee and to identify a time for the closed-door exam. One of the faculty members must be the student's primary research supervisor. It is acceptable to include a faculty member from another department at University of Rochester or from outside of University of Rochester (as one of the three) if this faculty member has significant expertise relevant to the student's research. In the case of a committee member from outside of University of Rochester, a petition would have to be filed and the external member would have to be approved by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. This petition should be completed at least a month ahead of the closed-door exam, to allow for adequate time for the approval process. It is required that that student consult with their primary research supervisor for the formation of this committee. Please inform Erin Cabrera of the confirmed date and time of your closed-door exam along with who will be serving on your committee at least two weeks in advance of the examination date, four weeks in advance if a petition needs to be submitted for a committee member who is outside of the University.

How the Exam Works

STEP 1: THE WRITTEN PROPOSAL

The student needs to submit a PhD project proposal to the committee. The proposal should be no longer than 15 single-spaced pages (this includes any figures / tables, but references can be extra beyond 15 pages), and should approximately follow the format of an NSF proposal Project Description (although there is no need for a Broader Impacts section) or a NASA Science/Technical/Management Plan. The proposal should describe the relevant background and motivation for the project(s), the work accomplished and the results and interpretations so far. The proposal should also describe the proposed work and explain why it is important and how it is going to be accomplished during the remainder of the PhD. The research proposal should be prepared in close cooperation with the student's primary research advisor. The proposal needs to be submitted to the committee at least two weeks ahead of the scheduled closed-door exam session.

STEP 2: THE CLOSED-DOOR EXAM

Only the student and the committee will be present at this exam, which will be approximately 2 hours in length. The student will give a brief (20 - 30 min) presentation on the work accomplished so far and the plan for the duration of the PhD. The committee will then ask the student questions. The questions will be of two general varieties:

- 1) focused on the research proposal and quality and feasibility of the science and
- 2) focused on general background knowledge. Some of these will be directly relevant to the research proposal, while others may test more broad knowledge in the field.

Each committee member will provide 1 proposal-focused and 1 background knowledge-focused question to the student 1 week ahead of time to help the student prepare; however, committee members will ask multiple questions each (so there will be questions that the student has not seen ahead of time).

The exam will be evaluated with the aid of a rubric (attached at the end of this handbook), and the possible outcomes of the exam are as follows:

- a) Pass: Promotion by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies to the status of "PhD Candidate". Depending on transfer credit/credit hours, a MS in Geological Sciences is awarded.
- b) Some follow-up required: In this case, the student will be required to address in writing specific questions / criticisms that came up during the exam and that were not addressed to the satisfaction of the committee. In this case, the student would be required to submit answers to questions /

criticisms and a revised proposal to the committee within 2 weeks after the exam. The committee will then determine if the student has passed.

- c) Fail: In this case, the student will be placed on academic probation and given one more chance to repeat the exam (revised proposal and closed-door exam). The repeat closed-door exam must be completed no later than 5 months after the initial exam. A repeat fail would result in dismissal from the PhD program with a MS degree.

STEP 3: THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION

After the student has passed the exam, the student will do a public presentation for the department (also 20 – 30 min in length), followed by questions from the audience. This presentation must be completed by the end of the semester following passing the exam.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RESEARCH ARTICLE SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION

Peer-reviewed articles are the main type of “final product” of our research, and the main way that our research findings become available to the broader research community and interested parties outside of the research community (e.g., educators, policymakers, industry). The ability to write lead-author research articles, take them through the process of critical peer review and ultimately publish them is a key component of a researcher’s skill set. It is therefore essential that PhD students get sufficient practice and experience with this process. Having published and submitted lead-author research papers on the CV is also absolutely essential for success in applications for postdocs and jobs.

The requirements/policies for EES PhD students regarding submission and publication of research articles are as follows:

- At least 1 lead-author research article submitted to a peer-reviewed journal in the appropriate research field by the end of the 5th year in the program at EES.
- At least 1 lead-author peer-reviewed research article published, and 1 other submitted to journals in the appropriate research field by the time of PhD defense (students would not be permitted to proceed to defense otherwise).
- Research articles must have approval of the student’s primary advisor and must be on original research that was done at EES (i.e., not elsewhere during the student's undergraduate or Master’s degree prior to arriving at EES).
- The articles must contain original research contributions. Review articles or book chapters that do not contribute original data or analysis cannot be used to satisfy this requirement.
- These rules could be adjusted in the case of unusual extenuating circumstances (e.g., unusually prolonged illness or analytical instrumentation problems); in this case approval from the student’s advising committee and the DGS is necessary.
- In the case that a student has not submitted a research article by the end of the 5th year, and the advising committee and DGS find that there were not sufficient extenuating circumstances to reasonably explain this then the student would be placed on academic probation.
- This policy would apply in full to students who have not yet taken their qualifying exams as of the start of summer of 2023 (i.e., the 1st and 2nd year students as of June 2023, incoming new students and any future students).
- For students currently in the program who have already taken their qualifying exams, the requirement is instead that at least 1 lead-author research article must be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal in the appropriate research field by the time of defense.

It is recommended that all PhD students meet with their dissertation committee at least once a year (once a semester would be even better) so that support and feedback can be provided thus helping to facilitate this publication requirement.

FINAL ORAL THESIS DEFENSE AND ASSOCIATED PREPARATION

When you are ready to begin writing your final PhD thesis, please ask Erin Cabrera for a copy of the “Preparation of Doctoral Theses” manual also known as the “Blue Book”. This is your guide to formatting and arranging your thesis. It is important that you follow these guidelines in the preparation of your thesis.

Final Oral Thesis Committee

The committee for the final oral examination for the PhD (i.e., PhD. thesis defense) “shall consist of at least 2 current full-time faculty members of the rank of assistant professor or higher (one of those being the student’s advisor) who hold their primary appointment in the candidate’s major department, and one full-time faculty member, assistant professor rank or higher with a primary appointment in a department other than the candidate’s major department (usually referred to as the outside reader).” The “outside reader” may be replaced by a person outside the University that is a recognized expert in the field; this requires prior approval by the Associate Graduate Dean of the College and the University Graduate Dean. (Paraphrased from Regulations Concerning Graduate Studies [Red Book]). The thesis must be approved by the entire committee before it can be registered for a thesis defense. The final oral examination committee is presided over by the University dean of graduate studies or an appointed representative, who serves as Chair; nominations for the chair of the committee must be submitted by the department to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies within the College (ASE).

Should an additional person with the rank of assistant professor or higher, from another university or a recognized expert in the field be required on the committee, that person, after permission has been granted by the Associate Dean’s Office, will constitute a member of the committee above and beyond those outlined in the previous paragraph. However, such a “second outside member” does not have a vote on the committee proceedings.

Permission to add any committee member(s) from outside the university requires submission of a “Petition for a Non-Standard Member of the PhD Examination Committee” form along with a complete copy of the curriculum vitae from the committee-member-to-be, and a short description of why the outside committee member is a good fit for being on the committee. This form must be submitted and approved by the Dean’s office before the registration paperwork can be submitted. Please speak with Erin Cabrera regarding the completion of this form.

Defense Registration

Please inform Erin Cabrera as soon as possible, at least 6 weeks in advance, once a defense date has been determined. She will then be able to assist you with exact dates and start your defense record (SharePoint). Your committee will need to receive a copy of your thesis **6 weeks in advance** of your defense date.

Your advisor and all of your committee members must verify that they have seen and read your PhD thesis in its final form (i.e., they should not find any errors in it). This is all done through your SharePoint record.

Once verified by your committee, your thesis will then go through the GEPA office and the University’s Dean’s office for approval. Again, this is all done through SharePoint.

Post Defense

The University of Rochester requires all graduate students submitting a PhD thesis to access the online University of Rochester ProQuest web site to complete and submit a publishing form. There is no fee for this submission. After the PhD defense is passed, each student will upload a pdf of their final corrected dissertation to the ProQuest site. Students can access this site before their defense. However, you will not be able to complete the form until after your successful defense. Further upload instructions will be sent after the successful completion of your defense.

After your defense and all other formalities have been completed (and any final corrections have been incorporated into your thesis) all students need to provide a final copy of their essay/thesis either pre-bound or as a PDF to Erin Cabrera.

TIMELINE FOR PhD STUDENTS

End of second semester in residence – candidates should have selected an advisor.

Summer following first year in residence - submission of first-year research report.

Fourth semester – By the end of this semester you should have taken most of your courses.

End of fifth semester in residence –finish the Qualifying Examination by the end of this semester.

End of fifth year -- you should have at least one paper that has been submitted for publication.

After fifth year – the tuition waiver you receive covers 90 credit hours. Students continuing enrollment after 90 credit hours must register for EES 999 (Continuation of doctoral enrollment) and will be responsible for the \$1,070 / semester continuation fee. **These fees are not covered by a tuition waiver.**

End of Seventh Year - The PhD program is to not exceed 7 years (per University regulations). However, if there are extenuating circumstances, a Time to Degree Extension petition can be filed with the Dean's Office. This form would need the approval of your advisor, Departmental Chair and the GEPA Dean. This form should be filed no later than 7/31 at the end of the summer of your seventh year.

MASTER'S CANDIDATES – DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The EES Department offers a Master of Science degree in Geosciences. Students may choose to either focus their studies in one of two areas: 1) Climate and Environmental Sciences or 2) Earth and Planetary Sciences, or to keep their studies more broad in Geosciences.

There are two plans for completing the MS degree, known as Plan A and Plan B. Plan A is a research and thesis track; Plan B is a course and essay track. The decision to follow Plan A or Plan B should be made early in your program and is a matter for you and your advisor to discuss. Requirements and information that applies for both plans:

1. Complete 30 graduate credit hours of correlated graduate work (including formal coursework)
2. At least 20 of these credit hours must be at the University of Rochester. Up to 10 graduate credit hours may be transferred from another university, with permission of the department and approval from the University of Rochester. All transfer credits must not have been used as part of your undergraduate degree program.
3. Complete a minimum of 18 credit hours in formal class work (four to five 4-credit courses) in the EES department. It is acceptable to have up to 2 of these credits come from EESC 499 (department seminar). For a list of graduate courses please see the EES department website. Up to 8 credits may come from relevant graduate courses in other departments, with approval from the EES department.
4. A minimum of one year (two consecutive semesters, excluding summers) in residence and enrollment as a full-time student is required.
5. It is expected that students complete the program in no more than 4 semesters, although a longer timeline for part-time study is possible with EES department and University approval

Additional requirements and information specific to Plan A:

1. Completion of EESC 495 (Research) and EESC 491 (Reading). These courses must provide a combined total of no less than 6 credit hours and normally no more than 12 credit hours. Under special circumstances, with prior approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, the combined credit for these courses may exceed 12 credit hours.
2. Completion of a Master's thesis. The thesis must be submitted according to a predetermined format. Reach out to the Programs Coordinator, Erin Cabrera, for an electronic copy of the booklet.
3. You will need to inform Erin Cabrera at least two weeks prior to your desired defense date.
4. Your master's thesis must be received in the SAS Graduate Studies Office by Donna Derks at least 5 working days prior to the defense date. To register your thesis for defense, you should email a PDF of the thesis to Donna Derks in Graduate Studies Office in Lattimore 206. Her email address is donna.derks@rochester.edu. You should also be sending your committee your thesis at this time (or sooner). Please contact Erin if you have any questions regarding this process.
5. You must pass a final oral examination (defense). The examining committee will be appointed by you and your advisor, then then approved by Associate Dean, and it will consist of two faculty members from your major department (Earth and Environmental Sciences) and one faculty member from another department within the University. A scientist external to the University could instead serve as the 3rd member of the committee. This required pre-approval from the University – please contact Erin at least 2 months ahead of the defense to organize this. The department recommends an oral presentation of your research -- open to the public -- before the closed oral examination.
6. Once the thesis is accepted by your committee, a PDF copy (using the proper format, see No. 2 above), containing all of the required corrections and revisions, must be emailed to Donna Derks in the office of SAS Graduate Studies Office, the Programs Coordinator, Erin Cabrera, and to

your advisor.

Additional requirements and information specific to Plan B:

1. Completion of a MS Essay (EESC 493) for 4 credits in the final semester. The Essay is a culminating experience that should focus on a key area of interest to the student and help to advance the student's professional goals. The topic of the Essay should be developed in consultation with the primary advisor.
2. The total credit for MS Research (EESC 495) + Reading (EESC 491) + MS Essay (EESC 493) may not exceed 6 credit hrs.

Attendance of Departmental Seminars

The attendance guidelines for MS students who register for EESC 499 for 1 credit are the same as listed for PhD students. Seminar attendance is optional for MS students who do not register for EESC 499.

List of Research, Reading and Dissertation Courses for MS Students

EESC 491: Master's Reading.

EESC 493: Master's Essay. Enroll in this course for 4 credits in the final semester if you are doing a Plan B Master's degree.

EESC 495: Master's Research. Credit hours are assigned by the instructor, specific to each student's needs. Note: you do not need to be enrolled in Master's research in order to actually be doing research.

EESC 895: Continuation of Master's Enrollment: For Plan B Master's degree or Plan A Master's degree who are not working full-time on their dissertation. Once you are finished with the minimum requirements for the degree (i.e., 30 credit hours), if you plan to complete your degree off campus you must register for Master's Continuation of Enrollment (EES 895) and you will be responsible for the continuation fee at that point onward (\$1070 per semester). This registration is "X" time status (less than part time).

EESC 899: Master's Dissertation. Enroll in this course if you have exceeded 30 credits but still have not completed your thesis dissertation. This is for those completing a Plan A Master's degree and are working full-time on their dissertation. Satisfactory completion of this course is based on the final decision of your advising committee (at least 3 faculty members).

EVALUATIONS, PROBATION AND DISMISSAL

Annual Evaluations

In accordance with University policy, EES conducts annual evaluations of PhD students. The main goal of the evaluations is to assess progress and to provide feedback to the students to help them progress toward the PhD degree and their career goals. The evaluations cover learning (formal courses and other more informal learning), research and research products (e.g., conference presentations, publications) as well as teaching. Students complete their part of the evaluation form and submit it to their advisor, who completes their respective parts. The student and advisor then meet to discuss and finalize the evaluation form, and submit the evaluation to Erin Cabrera and Vas Petrenko, typically by around mid-August.

Academic Probation

All graduate students are expected to maintain high standards of academic performance in their coursework and their research. Both the School of Arts & Sciences and the department have policies outlining when a student is to be placed on academic probation.

SAS Academic Probation

A student who receives the grade of lower than B- in one or more courses will be considered to have an unsatisfactory record and will be automatically placed on academic probation.

When a student is placed on probation by the SAS GEPA office, the DGS (Vas Petrenko), Programs Coordinator (Erin Cabrera) and the student will be notified in writing (email communication is considered to be “in writing”) and the student will be given one semester to resume satisfactory academic standing. During the probationary period, students will remain eligible to receive federal and institutional assistance (except when they have exceeded their degree deadline).

At the end of the probationary semester, progress will be reviewed by the SAS GEPA office. A student will be removed from SAS academic probation if the student completes 12 semester hours of graduate credit with no grade lower than B-.

If a student does not re-establish satisfactory academic standing (i.e., fails to complete 12 credits or receives a grade lower than a B-), the student will become ineligible to receive financial aid and will be excluded (dismissed) by the Dean of Graduate Education.

Departmental Academic Probation

Additionally, a student may be placed on departmental probation instead of, or in addition to, college academic probation. Departmental probation may be recommended if a student is not making satisfactory progress towards completing the PhD program’s requirements. A student may be placed on departmental probation when:

- Failure to earn at least a B- in all formal coursework.
- Failure to make satisfactory progress in research.
- Failure to pass the qualifying exam on the timeline prescribed by the department.
- A committee of program faculty, chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, make a decision to place the student on probation.

Additional criteria for placement on departmental probation include, but are not limited to, a persistent and substantial pattern of:

- Inconsistent attendance of classes or departmental seminars.
- Insufficient participation in classes designated by instructors as requiring such participation.
- Discourteous or inconsiderate behavior toward faculty, staff, peers, research participants, or clients.
- Behavior that interferes with effective functioning as a student, research scientist, or professional in training, including: unreceptiveness to supervisory feedback, difficulties in working collaboratively with supervisors, supervisees, or colleagues, and chronic tardiness in meeting academic and professional responsibilities.
- Performance in professional activities that is below expectation for the student's level of training.
- Unethical conduct of any kind, including academic dishonesty or misconduct involving scientific or professional behavior.

In placing a student on departmental probation, the faculty will provide the student and the SAS GEPA office with a statement of the reasons for probation and the steps to be taken to have the probation status removed, including the dates by which such steps must be completed.

The consequences of being on departmental probation will be determined by a committee of program faculty, chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, based on probation circumstances, and may include (but are not limited to) being ineligible to receive departmental travel and research funds, not being allowed to proceed with qualifying exams or not being allowed to proceed to PhD defense.

A student will be removed from academic probation once a committee of program faculty, chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, determines that the deficiency that triggered the probation has been adequately addressed.

Exclusion (Dismissal from Graduate Program)

A student who fails to resume satisfactory academic standing during a probationary period after being notified of placement on probation will be excluded from the program. In such cases, the student has an opportunity to appeal the exclusion decision to the SAS GEPA office.

Additionally, a student who has failed to make satisfactory academic progress according to the Departmental criteria or failed to remediate during the Departmental probation period will be excluded by the program. In these cases, a committee of program faculty, chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, will make the decision to exclude the student.

Funding will cease on the effective date of the exclusion unless other arrangements are made. When a student is excluded by the program, the student has an opportunity to appeal the exclusion decision to the SAS GEPA office. When a student appeals the program's exclusion decision, the exclusion becomes effective after the appeal process has concluded if the appeal is denied.

Notification of Exclusion

When the SAS GEPA office determines that a student is to be excluded both our program and the student will be informed in writing (email communication is considered to be "in writing") within 10 business days of the determination. Similarly, when a decision to exclude a student is made by the Department, both the student and the SAS GEPA office will be informed in writing within 10 business days of the decision.

The exclusion (dismissal) notification will include the effective date of the exclusion and a clear statement of the reason(s) for exclusion.

Appeal Process for Exclusions by the Department

Students wishing to appeal a **program's** exclusion decision may appeal the final program exclusion decision to the SAS GEPA office. To appeal a program decision, students should submit a request in writing to the attention of the Dean of Graduate Education within 10 calendar days of the date of the program's final written determination of exclusion and include any supporting materials at that time.

If no appeal is filed within the 10-day appeal period, the program's decision becomes final and is not subject to appeal.

Grounds for appeal of a program's exclusion decision are as follows:

- Procedural errors in the exclusion process.
- New information discovered after the exclusion that was not available at the time of the exclusion and could impact the outcome.
- Program's decision to exclude was manifestly contrary to the weight of the information available at the time of the decision (i.e., exclusion is obviously unreasonable and unsupported by the great weight of information).

Appeals of program exclusions are reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (or the Dean's designee) who may request additional information from, or a meeting with, the student and/or program before making a final decision.

If the Dean (or the dean's designee) does not find that any of the aforementioned grounds for appeal are present, the Dean will uphold the outcome of the program. If the Dean (or the Dean's designee) finds that grounds for appeal are valid, they may amend the decision of the program.

POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS SWITCHING ADVISORS

1. In the event that a student no longer wishes to work with their current advisor:

The student reaches out to other potential advisors in the department and informs the current advisor that they would like to switch advisors/labs/projects.

- a) If the student is successful in identifying a new advisor who is potentially willing to take them on, the student should inform the DGS and Department Chair. The DGS and Chair will discuss the situation with the student and current and prospective new advisor. The prospective new advisor should also have a separate discussion with the current advisor. Assuming both the student and prospective new advisor are then still interested in making a change (note that agreement from the current advisor is not needed), then the switch can be made. The change would be formalized with a letter from the Chair to the student with both the old and new advisors as well as the DGS cc'd. The current advisor (or Chair, depending on source of support) and new advisor would need to come to an agreement (in consultation with the Chair if needed) regarding the switch of stipend support to new advisor. It is expected that this process should be complete within ≈ 1 month of the time the student informs the current advisor that they would like to make the change.
- b) In the event that the student is unable to identify a new advisor in the department, the student and the current advisor should again consider whether they want to continue the student - advisor relationship. At this stage, the advisor is under no obligation to continue advising or financially supporting the student. If the student, the advisor, or both decide that they no longer wish to work together, the student would need to leave the program. At this point, the student should discuss with the DGS and Chair. In the case that the student is close to obtaining a degree (MS or PhD, within a semester), has been performing well in research, classes and TAing, and does not have their own stipend support (e.g., a fellowship) the department would try to support the student (likely via a TAship) until the completion of the degree, pending availability of funds. In the case that the student is further than 1 academic semester (4.5 months) from obtaining a degree but near the end of the degree, the department may still try to provide less than or up to 1 semester of financial support via a TAship, pending availability of funds.

We note that the DGS, Chair, and current and previous advisor will consult to determine if it is appropriate for the previous advisor to serve on the dissertation committee.

2. In the event that an advisor no longer wishes to or is unable (e.g., due to illness or death) to advise a student

The advisor (assuming they are able) should reach out to the student, DGS and Chair to communicate that they no longer wish to work with this student, and to provide rationale for this decision. The DGS and Chair would meet with the advisor and the student (separately) to better understand the situation. Assuming the DGS and Chair are in agreement, the advisor would no longer need to advise or financially support the student. At this point, if the student does not have their own stipend support (e.g., a fellowship) the department would try to financially support the student (likely via a TAship) for a period of up to 1 semester (4.5 months) to allow the student time to identify a new advisor. See 1a and 1b above for guidance in the events that the student is or is not able to identify a new advisor.

DEPARTMENT LOGISTICS, EQUIPMENT ETC.

Room Assignments

In general, we try to provide all research and teaching assistants with office space in which they can do their work, meet with students, etc. To get your room assignment and keys, contact Erin Cabrera.

Telephone

Student offices generally do not have phone service. There are telephones located in each research laboratory. The phones in the laboratories are for use by persons associated with that particular lab.

Computers, Email Accounts, etc.

There is a computer (with some graphics and word processing software) connected to the copy machine located in the department mail room (227A Hutchison Hall). You may use these for general typing purposes, e-mail, etc. However, do not save ANY files to the hard drives, as the computers will be cleaned regularly, and non-essential files will be deleted. Bring your own flash drive / external storage drive to save your files when you work on these computers. The computers are all virus free – please try to keep them that way. You may use the computer in 227A at any time. You can also use any library computer. The university provides Outlook 365 e-mail accounts for graduate students. You will be notified when your account has been set up.

Please make sure that you provide Erin Cabrera (Hutchison Hall 227; ecabrer4@ur.rochester.edu) with your e-mail address, local address and phone number.

Mailboxes

Mail will be sorted and placed in the mail room for pick up. If students will be notified if a package has been received by the office. Outgoing mail (USPS) can be taken to the 1st floor outgoing mailbox near the Hylan elevators. Mail is delivered at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Copying

The department copier is meant for copying material related to teaching or research. It is not to be used for personal copying. Currently there is no code required for copying documents. However, if the department office finds that there is misuse occurring, then the department office will set a passcode on the machine and students will need to get the code from the instructor that they are a teaching assistant for and or their research supervisor.

For personal copying, use the copiers at the River Campus Libraries. There are black and white copiers in most river campus libraries and a color copier in Rush Rhees. Black and white copies cost 10 cents for 1-sided and 18 cents for 2-sided. For color copies they are 25 cents for 1-sided and 48 cents for 2-sided pages. These can be paid for with a UR ID with Flex Account or you can purchase a visitor card at Value Transfer Station (VTS) machines located in Rush Rhees, Carlson and the ITS center. There is also coin-operated photocopying available in Rush-Rhees library.

Printers are also located in all river campus libraries. Costs are the same as with photocopying and can be paid for by the same methods listed above.

Libraries

Geoscience materials (books, journals, maps) are housed in Carlson Library, located in the Computer Sciences Building next door to Hutchison. Their phone number is (585) 275-4488. Hours for the River Campus libraries can be found at <http://www.library.rochester.edu/> The Carlson Library also houses chemistry, biology, mathematics, statistics and engineering collections. Anyone there can help you with using the online catalog (Voyager), interlibrary loans, finding journals, etc. We strongly recommend that incoming students sign up for the library's informational classes. Our librarian is Sue Cardinal. Her phone number is (585) 275-1763 and email address is_scardinal@library.rochester.edu. During the course of your studies/research you may need to visit one or more of several other libraries on campus, such as the main Rush Rhees Library or the Physics-Astronomy Library in Bausch and Lomb Hall.

Rock Storage

The department has rock cases available for graduate students whose research involves collecting significant volumes of rock. In general, cases will be provided to students when they need them. Students in need of rock cases should see Gerry Kloc (Hutchison 508) our laboratory technician (gerald.kloc@rochester.edu) or Minako Righter (Hutchison 227E) our scientist (mrighter@ur.rochester.edu). The case(s) will be yours until you finish your graduate program at the U of R. After you have finished your degree, you are expected to remove any materials which you feel are valuable – either to you or to posterity. If you want your rocks saved, but cannot take them with you when you leave the University, you will have to make special arrangements to have them saved. In any event, all unlabeled specimens go!

Rock Cutting Room

The department rock cutting room (Hutchison 109) is equipped with rock-cutting saws, a drill press, a bandsaw, a rock-splitter and a vibro-lap. Check with Gerry Kloc (Hutchison 508) our laboratory technician (gerald.kloc@rochester.edu), Minako Righter (Hutchison 227E, mrighter@ur.rochester.edu) or Rory Cottrell (Hutchison Hall 209C) our scientist (rory.cottrell@rochester.edu) before using this room to make sure you are familiar with this equipment and have the proper training and certifications. Students will be held responsible for broken saws, bent blades, etc. -- so please make sure that you know what you are doing. Keys can be signed out from the department office on an as needed basis.

Department Collections

The department has an extensive collection of Teaching, Museum and Research specimens. Permission is required to use, borrow or modify specimens in Teaching, Museum, or Research collections. Please coordinate with your academic advisor, Minako Righter (Hutchison 227E, mrighter@ur.rochester.edu) or Rory Cottrell (Hutchison 209C, rory.cottrell@rochester.edu).

Microscopes

Research microscopes are available through your advisor. In addition, teaching microscopes are housed in Hutchison Hall Room 138) – these microscopes should not be removed from this room. Talk to Rory Cottrell, Scientist, if you wish to use one of these microscopes. Her email is rory.cottrell@rochester.edu.

DEPARTMENTAL GET-TOGETHERS

DEPARTMENT COLLOQUIA

The department has a weekly Seminar Series (Frontiers in Earth and Environmental Sciences –EES 499, 1 cr. hr. each semester) where speakers are invited from other universities to present lectures. Please make sure that you are registered for EES 499 every semester that you are here (except when you are registered EES 490). ALL students must attend at least 75% these seminars. For the purposes of attendance, grad student-led seminars (events that are only for graduate students) count the same as regular seminars. A reception normally follows the lecture and gives students a chance to meet scientists from other universities and research labs and learn of their research interests.

PICNICS AND GET-TOGETHERS

The Department, with the help of the EES Undergraduate Student organization, Society of Earth and Environmental Science Students (SEESS), organizes social events a couple of times per year – all are invited, including families and significant others.

DISCLAIMER

This handbook is intended to cover general information and regulations which are of particular interest to the graduate students in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. However, we have neither the space nor the inclination to include all regulations which may be pertinent to you during your tenure at the University. If a question arises which is not dealt with in this handbook, then consult the current issue of the Graduate Bulletin that is on-line at <http://www.rochester.edu/GradBulletin/>. It is the official “law” of the university, and as such, except for department requirements, its contents take precedence over any other source of information within this institution.

Rubric for evaluation of first year PhD student performance

Research and Courses categories are weighted equally for the overall evaluation

	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Research	Shows good progress in learning the necessary background for the assigned research project(s). Shows good progress with learning skills associated with the project(s) (e.g., lab or field techniques, coding, mathematical analysis, etc.). Good progress with moving forward with the project(s) (student background, difficulty of tasks, unexpected issues such as instrument problems etc. would be taken into consideration).	Progress is slower than expected in one or more areas highlighted in the "Good" column to the left.	Slow progress in learning and tasks as compared to what is expected.
Courses	Good performance across the board (B or higher) in all courses. The student is clearly motivated and making a very good effort. Student background / preparation for a given course would be taken into consideration.	Good performance in most courses, but marginal (B-) in one or more course.	Received a grade below a B- in one or more courses.

Rubric for evaluation of PhD qualifying exams

Note that a fail in any of the categories below will trigger a “Fail” for the overall exam

	Pass	Follow-up required	Fail
Written Proposal (15%)	Proposal is clearly written and organized, well formatted and fits within the length limit (15 pages of text max), with correct grammar, spelling and reference / citation formats	Proposal is overall in a satisfactory shape, but some aspects need improvement as compared to the “Pass” description on the left.	Proposal is seriously deficient or completely lacking in some components as per exam guidelines and “Pass” description on the left
Oral presentation (10%)	Presentation is clearly structured, with effective graphics and easy-to-read slides, and delivered clearly. Fits within the 20-30 min guideline.	Presentation is satisfactory, but some aspects need improvement as compared to the “Pass” description on the left.	Presentation is seriously deficient in multiple aspects as compared to “Pass” description on the left
Background knowledge (25%)	In the proposal, presentation and answering questions, demonstrates good mastery of relevant background knowledge, both with regards to knowledge specific to the project(s) and knowledge in the broader fields associated with the project(s)	Some significant gaps in knowledge as compared to the “Pass” description, and / or some key questions answered incorrectly	The proposal, presentation and answers to questions reveal many gaps in knowledge and understanding of key concepts
Research progress (30%)	Good progress in learning of skills relevant to the project(s) (e.g., laboratory or field skills, coding, mathematical analyses, etc.) and applying these skills to progress through some significant tasks associated with the project(s). Student background, difficulty of tasks, unexpected issues such as instrument problems etc. would be taken into consideration.	Progress is overall satisfactory but slower than expected in one or more areas highlighted in the “Pass” column to the left.	Slow progress in learning and applying skills to progress through research tasks as compared to what is expected.
Research plan (20%)	A clear, well-explained research plan that includes a timeline. The proposed research is scientifically compelling, and the plan is feasible considering available resources and duration of a PhD.	Plan is overall sound, but with some gaps / shortcomings (e.g., scientific motivation, feasibility, etc.)	No clear plan and / or lack of scientific motivation for the proposed project and / or serious flaws in project design (scientific approach, feasibility, etc.)