Timelines for Completion of Graduate Degree Programs
Department of Geography

Note: These timelines are intended to provide general guidance in degree program planning. They should be taken seriously, but should not be construed as an ideal against which all progress (or lack thereof) is to be measured. Each student will move through their program in ways that are somewhat unique and determined by their specific background, chosen project, coursework requirements, research challenges, financial support, personal issues, and other such factors. Nonetheless, attention to the timing of major events in graduate study, as indicated here, will help students have a better chance to complete their programs within the periods for which they are most likely to receive departmental and other forms of funding.

Masters Thesis Timeline

Year 1
September
- Student orientation
- Student and supervisor determine coursework
- Student takes full course load
- Student meets with supervisor to complete Memo of Expectations for submission to Student Services staff

October
- Student and supervisor begin discussing thesis topic and research costs
- Student and supervisor begin establishing supervisory committee

November
- Student prepares Tri-council application (NSERC, SSHRC, Affiliated), with feedback from supervisor on draft

December
- Student submits Tri-council application

January
- Student takes full course load

February
- Student and supervisor continue work on thesis topic, summer research plan
- Student begins to organize date for committee’s spring review meeting

March
- Student begins working on Spring Review and Memo of Expectations
- Students needing Ethics Review Board (ERB) approval for research begin working on application

May-August
- Student submits completed Spring Review and Memo of Expectations to Student Services by end of May
- Student begins thesis research (start for human geography students may be delayed slightly by process of gaining ERB approval)

Year 2
September-December
- Student conducts research and begins analysis of data or other materials
- Supervisor reviews and approves thesis outline
- Student finishes remaining course requirements, if necessary

**January-March**
- Student writes thesis

**April**
- Student presents research at the Graduate Student Symposium (graduation requirement for all Masters students)

**April-August**
- Student delivers first thesis draft to supervisor
- Student makes revisions to thesis as suggested by supervisor
- Physical geography students defend thesis
- Student submits final thesis by no later than August deadline, preferably earlier
- Student prepares for graduation (see graduation requirements at http://www.grad.ubc.ca/)

---

**Doctoral Thesis Timeline**

**Year 1**

**September**
- Student orientation
- Student and supervisor begin working on program plan
- Student takes at least one course
- Student prepares and submits Tri-council application (NSERC, SSHRC, Affiliated), with feedback from supervisor on draft (for fuller list of awards for which students may apply, see [https://www.grad.ubc.ca/scholarships-awards-funding](https://www.grad.ubc.ca/scholarships-awards-funding))
- Student meets with supervisor to complete Memo of Expectations for submission to Student Services staff

**October-December**
- Student and supervisor finalize program plan; student continues coursework

**January-February**
- Student takes further coursework, possibly finishing requirements
- Student and supervisor begin developing thesis topic
- Student and supervisor begin establishing supervisory committee
- Student organizes committee’s spring review session

**March**
- Student begins working on Spring Review and Memo of Expectations

**April-May**
- Student begins preparing for comprehensive examinations, in consultation with committee members (process may take through the summer)
- Student submits completed Spring Review and Memo of Expectations to Student Services by end of May

**Year 2**

**September**
- Student finishes remaining coursework requirements
- Student develops research funding plan, in consultation with supervisor
• Students who did not receive Tri-council funding the previous round prepare and submit Tri-council applications (NSERC, SSHRC, Affiliated), with feedback from supervisor on draft

October-December
• Student reads and prepares for comprehensive examinations

January-March
• Student takes comprehensive examinations (written and oral)
• Student begins preparing thesis proposal (after comprehensive exams) and ERB application (if needed)

April-May
• Student develops dissertation proposal, in consultation with supervisor and committee members
• Student submits completed Memo of Expectations to Student Services staff by end of May

June-August
• Dissertation proposal accepted

Year 3
• Student conducts dissertation research
• During spring, student gets feedback from supervisory committee and meets with supervisor for the annual thesis progress review; the report is submitted to Graduate Program Coordinator
• Student develops back-up funding for 5th year, if necessary
• Student submits completed Memo of Expectations to Student Services staff by end of May

Year 4
• Student writes thesis and submits it to supervisor and committee for review
• During spring, student gets feedback from supervisory committee and meets with supervisor for the annual thesis progress review; the report is submitted to Graduate Program Coordinator
• Student prepares for graduation (see graduation requirements at http://www.grad.ubc.ca/, and download graduation/examination timeline and submission planning tools at www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/final-doctoral-exam/tools-planning-doctoral-exam)
• Student defends thesis
• Student begins submitting job applications (where applicable)
• Student submits completed Memo of Expectations to Student Services staff by end of May

Year 5 (if necessary)
• Student finishes writing and defending thesis
• Student applies for sessional teaching opportunities (if available)
• Student begins submitting job applications (where applicable)