Department of Geographical Sciences

Combined BS/MS Handbook

2020 – 2021 Academic Year

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# Overview:

The Department of Geographical Sciences’ Combined, Five Year BS/MS Program is an opportunity for top-achieving undergraduate students to enhance their academic portfolio, and best prepare to enter the workforce or a doctoral program. This balanced research and academic program includes coursework at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and a student-designed applied research project. Students who complete all program requirements will leave the University of Maryland after five years with a Bachelor’s of Science (BS) in Geographical Sciences, as well as a Master’s of Science (MS) in Geographical Sciences.

# Eligibility:

Undergraduate Geographical Sciences students with:

* Minimum 3.5 GPA overall
* Undergraduate course plan eligible for eight credits of graduate courses in senior year (check with Undergraduate Advising Office).

# Application:

Spring **semester junior year:**

1. Visit Dr. Rachel Berndtson (rberndts@umd.edu) to discuss your eligibility.
2. Meet with potential faculty advisors to discuss application for the program.
3. Fill out step I application (posted here: <https://geog.umd.edu/undergraduate/combined-bsms-program> ) and return to Dr. Berndtson by **April 1**. Materials include:
* Student information (name, GPA, course plan, etc.)
* Research statement
* Potential faculty advisors
1. The Department of Geographical Sciences will reject or conditionally accept. Conditional acceptance indicates that in senior year the student is eligible to enroll in graduate courses and apply to the Graduate School for the MS degree. The Graduate School will determine admission to the MS portion of the degree in spring semester of the student’s senior year.
2. Acceptance decisions made by May of junior year.

Fall semester **senior year:**

1. Submit an application to the Graduate School by **December 15**. Admission requires both University and Departmental approval.
2. Acceptance decisions made by March of senior year.

# Academic Requirements:

1. Complete all Bachelors of Science in Geographical Sciences course requirements with 3.5 or above GPA.
2. Complete all Masters of Science in Geographical Sciences course requirements with 3.0 or above GPA.
3. Complete and successfully pass scholarly product in fifth year (see rubric at: : <https://geog.umd.edu/undergraduate/combined-bsms-program>)
4. Complete BS/MS academic benchmarks (see below).

# Academic Benchmarks:

Failure to meet any benchmarks within the given timeframe results in termination from the program. Students can appeal failed benchmarks to the Graduate Director.

1. Senior year:
	1. Pass all graduate level courses with grade of B or better
	2. Semester 1: meet with faculty advisor to discuss coursework and scholarly product plan
	3. Semester 2: meet with faculty advisor to discuss coursework and scholarly product plan
2. Fifth year:
	1. Pass all graduate level courses with grade of B or better
	2. Start of semester 1: meet with faculty advisor to discuss scholarly product plan through GEOG789 (submit independent studies form and proposal, Appendix E)
	3. Middle of semester 1: meet with faculty advisor to discuss scholarly product plan; advisor assesses student’s progress towards work outlined in GEOG789 proposal
	4. Start of semester 2: meet with faculty advisor to discuss scholarly product plan through GEOG789 (submit independent studies form and proposal)
	5. End of semester 2: submit first draft of scholarly product by April 1st;
	6. End of semester 2: submit final draft of scholarly product by April 15th; faculty advisor and graduate director review and submit evaluation for pass/fail

# Faculty Advisor

Students select a graduate faculty advisor in the step I application to the BS/MS program. The advisor must be a member of the Department of Geographical Sciences graduate faculty. The advisor’s research should align with the student’s MS research interests.

Graduate faculty advisors assist students in selecting graduate level courses, and mentor students through the process of completing the scholarly product. Students and faculty advisors meet regularly in the fifth year through GEOG789: Independent Readings.

# Course Requirements:

The BS degree requires 120 credit hours, and the MS degree requires 30 credit hours. **Eight credit hours for the BS degree will be double counted for the MS degree.** The eight double-counted credits only fulfill non-major elective credits for the BS degree. If in senior year a student opts out of the MS degree, the eight credits are applied towards the BS degree.

The eight **double-counted credits** include:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 4 Fall Semester** | **Credits** | **Year 4 Spring Semester** | **Credits** | **Double Counted Credits** |
| GEOG6XX (upper level elective) | 3 | GEOG606 (stats) | 3 |   |
| GEOG798 (grad seminar) | 1 | GEOG798 (grad seminar) | 1 |
| Total credits | 4 |   | 4 | 8 |

The MS degree requires 22 additional credits of 600/700 level courses in the fifth year, including:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 5 Fall Semester** | **Credits** | **Year 5 Spring Semester** | **Credits** | **Total Credits** |
| GEOG789 (research) | 3 | GEOG789 (research) | 3 |   |
| GEOG6XX (600 level elective) | 3 | GEOG6XX (600 level human elective) | 3 |
| GEOG6XX (600 level technical elective | 3 | GEOG601 (nature, practice of science) | 3 |
| GEOG6XX (600 level physical elective) | 3 | GEOG798 (seminar) | 1 |
| Total credits | 12 |   | 10 | 22 |

# Course Permissions

Several forms are required to take graduate level classes as an undergrad, mark them as eligible for transfer to the MS degree, and complete the actual transfer for the MS degree.

Visit the MS Students page on the Department’s Intranet for more info on submitting these forms, and links to the forms themselves:

[www.geog.umd.edu](http://www.geog.umd.edu)

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