

Department of Geosciences
Master's Student Handbook

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PART I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

i. Mission Statement

The graduate program in the Department of Geosciences strives to produce knowledgeable and well-rounded graduate students. While in the program, students will develop skills, such as reading, writing, data acquisition, critical analysis, and communication, while simultaneously conducting an original research project. Students will be given opportunities to achieve a breadth of knowledge relevant to their area of research, publish their research in peer-reviewed publications, and participate in professional development. Embracing and enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion among peers, faculty, staff, and other members of community within and external to the Department are central to this mission.

ii. Master's Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the Master's program in Geology will be able to:

- Demonstrate breadth of knowledge in the geosciences
- Exhibit fundamental knowledge within a chosen subdiscipline within the geosciences
- Formulate, evaluate, and defend testable scientific questions and hypotheses
- Acquire and implement skills in data collection and analysis
- Develop and carry out an original research project that contributes to a subfield of geoscience
- Develop and apply strong communication skills for (1) specialist and (2) non-scientist audiences
- Demonstrate the ability to work independently and collaboratively
- Build a network of colleagues and mentors

PART II. OBTAINING AND MAINTAINING MASTER'S STUDENT STATUS

In order to pursue graduate study at the University of Cincinnati, a student must hold a baccalaureate degree and provide official documentation of degree conferral. The student should have an official final transcript sent to the Graduate School, which displays degree certification. This is to be done prior to the start of the semester of matriculation.

Maintaining MASTER'S STUDENT STATUS student status is defined by the Graduate School as registering for the appropriate number of graduate credit hours per semester and making steady progress toward degree requirements. The Department of Geosciences has additional criteria for maintaining status to which the student is expected to adhere to the following criteria in order to obtain financial support from one academic year to the next:

- Take part in training applicable to graduate student success, including teaching, assisting with field work or field trips, and attending guest speaker presentations.
- Enroll in required coursework.
- Obtain acceptable grades in lecture and laboratory courses (see section I.ii below).
- Complete Graduate Assistant duties as assigned.
- Form a complete thesis committee by the end of the first semester in residence.
- Make satisfactory research progress as outlined by the primary advisor and thesis committee.
- Submit funding proposals on an annual basis.
- Submit an Annual Report each year.
- Meet with the Graduate Director and Academic Director on an annual basis to discuss progress.

If a student does not meet expectations set by the advisory committee and program, financial support may be revoked for a semester or academic year. The primary advisor and Graduate Director will draft a letter for the student stating the parameters that must be met for funding to be reinstated.

i. Graduate Credit Policies

Graduate credit can only be earned for those courses at the University of Cincinnati that are designated as graduate-level in the Schedule of Classes (6000-level or higher), or which have been approved in writing by appropriate program

authority for inclusion in the curriculum. Students who have completed graduate work at other schools may petition the Graduate Director for transfer of credits earned elsewhere to be applied towards a graduate degree at the University of Cincinnati.

Each semester, a student receiving a Graduate Assistantship (i.e. receiving a stipend for serving as a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant) must register for at least 12 *graduate* credit hours to be considered a full-time student. If the student would like to enroll in an undergraduate-level course or would like to audit a graduate-level course, they may do so, as long as the student is also registered for 12 graduate credit hours. The student must not exceed 18 total credit hours (graduate, undergraduate, or audited) per semester.

A Master's student is required to have at least 30 graduate credit hours completed in order to graduate. At least 20 hours must be derived from formal coursework, i.e. any course that receives a letter grade. Students are expected to complete all requirements for the degree in two years. If, due to extenuating circumstances, a student must continue in the program beyond two years, which is typically the maximum number of years funding is granted, the student must enroll for, and personally fund, at least one graduate credit per academic year in order to remain active. A student whose status has automatically terminated because of failure to register during an academic year will no longer be considered a graduate student but may seek reinstatement (<https://grad.uc.edu/fac-staff/handbook/grad-status/time-degree/reinstatements.html>). If a student remains inactive for three or more academic years, he or she must apply for readmission (<https://grad.uc.edu/fac-staff/handbook/grad-status/time-degree/readmission.html>). The student may seek reinstatement or readmission under the direction of their faculty advisor, Academic Director, and Graduate Director. Also note that students must register for at least one graduate credit hour during each semester (excluding summer semester) if they are using University resources such as libraries, University housing, campus laboratories, office space, equipment, recreational or computer facilities. The maximum time allowed by the Graduate School to complete all degree requirements is five years past matriculation into the program.

ii. Maintaining a Satisfactory GPA

A student must accumulate a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 to obtain a Master's degree at the University of Cincinnati. At least two-thirds of the minimum graduate credits for the degree must be at a level of B or higher. See the Graduate School Graduate Student Handbook (available at <https://grad.uc.edu/fac-staff/handbook.html>) for information on final exams, grade reports, grades assigned to repeated research courses, pass/fail grades, and grade changes.

iii. Required Geology Courses

During the two years in the program, each student is required to enroll in the following courses: GEOL7025 Geology Colloquium (each fall and spring semester), GEOL7005 Graduate Research (fall semester of first year of residence), GEOL7030 Four Day Field Trip (when offered), and at least one credit of the appropriate section of GEOL8005 Master's Thesis Research (each fall and spring semester). Students are also expected to enroll in lecture or lab courses in addition to these required courses. Students should consult with their primary faculty advisor to determine what courses would be most beneficial.

iv. Graduate Student Annual Report and Meeting with Academic and Graduate Directors

Students are expected to complete an annual report every spring (see Appendix 2 for the form). This report serves as a summary of the academic and research accomplishments by the student over the course of the year. The report should be completed by the student with the help of their faculty advisor and committee members. The student's faculty advisor must upload the completed report to the appropriate OneDrive folder by April 1. It is the student's responsibility to send their advisor the document well in advance of this deadline. Each student is also expected to meet with the Academic Director and Graduate Program Director to discuss their progress prior to the end of spring semester (the Graduate Director will circulate a schedule for these meetings in early April). Submission of a completed report and meeting with the directors are both required in order to obtain financial support for the following academic year (details of financial support can be found in Part IV).

PART III. REQUIREMENTS FOR THESIS PREPARATION, COMPLETION, DEFENSE, AND GRADUATION

In addition to taking appropriate graduate-level courses and maintaining a satisfactory GPA, a Master's student must complete and defend a thesis project under the supervision of a faculty advisor and support of an advisory committee to graduate with a Master's degree. Early and steady progress on the project is necessary in order to graduate within the two-year time frame. Accordingly, students will need to choose a research project and start working on it in earnest shortly after starting in the program. We have several benchmarks in place to help ensure students meet this schedule.

i. Proto-Committee

Early during the first term in residence, each graduate student will consult with their faculty advisor to choose and meet with a three-person proto-committee. This committee will help the student meet members of the geosciences faculty, get recommendations on what courses to take during fall and spring semesters the first year, gain recommendations on research activities that can be accomplished during the first year, and obtain advice and feedback that will promote timely thesis completion and defense. This committee consists of the faculty advisor, a departmental faculty member with related research interests, and a departmental faculty member who adds breadth of knowledge outside of the student's main research area. The proto-committee may (but does not have to) translate into a student's three-person thesis committee, which is to be established by the end of the first semester in residence (described in more detail in the following section). A summary of the proto-committee meeting(s) should be recorded on the proto-committee form by the primary faculty advisor. This form is available in Appendix 1 of this document and can be accessed by the faculty advisor via the shared "Proto-committee" folder on OneDrive. The completed form should be uploaded by the student's primary faculty advisor to the OneDrive "Proto-committee" folder by the end of the first semester.

ii. Advisory Committee and Committee Meetings

Students should have their advisory committee established by the end of the first semester in residence. A student's primary advisor will assist the student in choosing two individuals to serve on the committee. At least one member of the committee must be a faculty member of the University of Cincinnati Department of Geosciences. Faculty or other qualified scientists from other universities or government agencies who wish to serve on a student's committee must be approved by the Graduate School (see the Academic Director for more information about this).

Students are expected to regularly meet with their primary advisor, and to meet with their entire committee at least once per semester. It is up to the student to initiate and organize this meeting. If a committee member cannot be physically present, effort should be made to include them remotely via Zoom, Webex, Skype, etc.. The student will present a research proposal to their committee during the second semester in residence. In addition to presenting the project, the student should prepare and submit to their committee a written document that provides a short summary of the proposed work, including hypothesis/question, background, methods, expected results, and timeline. At subsequent meetings, the student must provide the advisor and committee members with an outline before the meeting takes place describing what courses have been taken, participation in professional development or training, research progress, a draft of the thesis document, if applicable, and future research and writing plans, including details of upcoming field and/or lab work and associated costs. This information is then presented in more detail during the meeting. Student are expected to collect written feedback from their advisor and committee members and summarize this information in their Annual Report.

iii. Thesis Document

The Master's thesis constitutes the approximate scope of at least one published research paper, and it is strongly encouraged that students submit their work for publication. Hence, emphasis should be placed on testing a well-defined hypothesis and/or thorough documentation of a single geologically-related problem. Ideally, theses should be formatted as manuscripts appropriate for submission to a particular journal (see instructions to authors on the journal's website). Because journals favor relatively short articles rather than long, exhaustive documents, emphasis should be placed on concise writing and a central theme. Additional information, such as extensive datasets, should be appendices. The thesis will need to be further formatted following the guidelines of the Graduate School and submitted electronically to the Graduate School (see details in ETD Submission section) during the graduation process. The

guidelines can be found at <https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/etd/formatting.html>. The thesis must be submitted to the committee **at least four weeks** prior to a student's planned defense date.

A strong, well-written thesis should include the following specific criteria:

- Demonstrate mastery of subject matter, associated literature, and theoretical concepts.
- The project rationale should be well-defined.
- The research should be placed in a broader context. This should include a review and critical assessment of prior (published) work conducted by others.
- Hypotheses or research questions should be well-reasoned, clearly articulated, and well-supported by the data.
- The study objectives and design should be clearly explained.
- Appropriate data analytical methods should be used, and their potential limitations should be noted.
- The conducted research should make an important contribution to the field and have strong publication potential.
- Writing should be clear and easy to understand with no grammar or spelling errors. Organization should be logical, and images should be high quality.

iv. Final Thesis Defense

In addition to producing a Master's thesis document, a Master's student must hold a final defense, which is a presentation summarizing the thesis research and results followed by questions from faculty, committee members, and fellow graduate students. The student should meet with their entire committee **at least three weeks** prior to the defense date. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the student is on track for graduating and that they have time to make any necessary adjustments to (1) the thesis before circulating it with the faculty at large, and (2) the final presentation. The student must announce the defense to geosciences faculty and fellow graduate students **at least two weeks** prior to the defense date. The student must also send their thesis to the faculty at large **at least one week prior to the defense**. Ideally, the defense will take place during the normal business day (9-5) when there are few class conflicts to allow faculty and other students to attend. See the Academic Director to secure a room in which to hold the defense.

The defense proceeds as follows:

- 1) The student is introduced by the Graduate Director, who also serves as the defense moderator, and the faculty advisor.
- 2) The student presents their research in a presentation lasting no more than 30 minutes.
- 3) The presentation is followed by a general question and answer session. Anyone in the audience, but particularly fellow graduate students and any guests, is free to ask questions at this time. This general Q&A session will be followed by a more in-depth Q&A session that only includes the student's committee and any other faculty interested in asking more detailed or specific questions related to the student's project.
- 4) The committee and remaining departmental faculty discuss the student's presentation and ability to answer questions and a vote is made as to whether the student passes or fails the final defense.
- 5) The student is then immediately notified of the decision (they should remain nearby after the presentation).
- 6) If the student passes, they need to gather the signatures of the primary advisor and committee members on the Committee Approval form, which is generated through the Graduation Checklist (<https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html>).

An exemplary final research presentation should meet the criteria outlined below. Please keep these in mind as you prepare your talk:

- Demonstrate mastery of subject matter as well as theoretical concepts directly related to the research.
- Place the proposed research within a broader context. The student should be able to articulate how the proposed research builds on previous work (both directly related to the project and more broadly within the geosciences).
- Arguments and objectives should be well-defined.
- Present well-reasoned, clearly articulated, and well-supported research questions or hypotheses.

- Exhibit a strong understanding of methods used.
- Conclusions should clearly be based on (and supported by) the study results.
- A well-organized and polished presentation. The talk should stay within the time limit. Slides should contain no grammar or spelling errors and should be easy to follow and understand.

v. Typical Master's Program Timetable

Master's students should adhere to the following timetable for completion of degree requirements unless other arrangements have been agreed upon by the primary advisor and Graduate Director. Each student is strongly encouraged to complete their degree by the end of the fourth semester in residence. If a student does not make satisfactory research progress and/or meet requirements mandated by the primary faculty advisor and advisory committee during the first year, this may be grounds for termination of financial support for subsequent semesters or ultimately dismissal from the program. Faculty advisors are expected to help their students in meeting the requirements of this timeline.

If a student starts in the spring semester, he or she should modify the table below accordingly.

Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and meet with proto-committee early in the term. • Establish advisory committee by the end of the term. • Present initial research summary and research plan to committee during first committee meeting. • Record progress, including details of committee meeting, in the Annual Report. • Submit any relevant funding proposals that may have fall deadlines (e.g. URC, NSF, GRFP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit funding proposals with spring deadlines (e.g. GSA and Sigma Xi) • Meet with committee and present research proposal. • Finalize Annual Report and send it to faculty advisor for review. Report due to the Graduate Director by April 1. • Meet with the Academic and Graduate directors to discuss progress.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit funding proposals. • Meet with full committee and report research and thesis progress. Discuss thesis completion, defense, and graduation timeline. • Record details of committee meeting and other progress, events, and achievements in the Annual Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File for graduation with the grad school (see below). • If thesis is finalized, submit thesis document to advisor and committee for review and prepare for defense and graduation (see below). • If thesis is not finalized, speak with advisor and committee about summer completion and graduation. • Finalize Annual Report and send it to advisor. Report due to the Graduate Director by April 1. • Meet with the Academic Director and Graduate Program Director to discuss thesis completion, defense, and graduation timeline.

A sample calendar that includes the dates for applying for graduation, thesis defense, and electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD) submission is provided at the end of this section.

vi. Applying for Graduation and Document Submission

The Graduation Process

Application to graduate is done through the Graduate School website. The deadline typically occurs quite early in the term and students are strongly encouraged to pay attention to these deadlines. Deadline information can be found at <https://gradapps.uc.edu/graduationdeadlines/graduation-deadlines.aspx>. Before a student applies to graduate, they must confirm with their primary faculty advisor and advisory committee that they are indeed prepared to finalize the thesis document and defend within the given timeline. When students are ready to apply for graduation, they will need

to access the Graduation Checklist (<https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html>), which includes the graduation application and steps required to complete the graduation process.

If a student is not prepared to graduate in the spring semester, they may graduate during the summer semester with no additional tuition costs. The timeline calendar below can be modified to reflect the deadlines for summer term. If the student is not prepared to graduate in the summer, they will need to graduate during the following school year. The student is responsible for paying for one credit hour of GEOL8005 for fall semester to maintain active student status for the entire academic year.

ETD (Electronic Thesis and Defense) Submission

Once the thesis document has been finalized and the student has obtained the appropriate signatures on the Committee Approval form, they will need to submit the document to the Graduate School. It is highly recommended that the student defends at least one week prior to the ETD submission deadline to allow enough time to make final edits to the document and to format the document properly. Full details on ETD formatting and submission can be found on the Graduate School’s ETD Information website (<https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/etd.html>)

Below is a sample calendar displaying approximate deadlines for Spring graduation application and ETD (Electronic Thesis and Dissertation) submission. Suggested dates for sending the finalized thesis document to the advisory committee and geosciences faculty have been added. Remember, deadlines are mandated by the Graduate School and are subject to change. Be sure to verify deadlines for fall, spring, and summer graduation on the Graduate School’s Critical Dates and Deadlines webpage (<https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/dates.html>).

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					February 1	2
3	4	5 Spring graduation application deadline	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Email thesis document to committee	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Meet with committee	March 1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Announce defense to department	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Email thesis document to all faculty	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Hold thesis defense	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 ETD submission deadline	29	30
31						

vii. Requirements for Students Who Want to Switch to the PhD Program

If a student is interested in switching to the PhD program, they will need discuss this with the primary advisor soon after starting at UC. A switch to the PhD program must be approved by the entire faculty by the end of the student's second semester in residence. This tight timeline assures that students who switch programs will still be on target to complete their qualifying exam during their third semester in residence. If a student misses this deadline, they will need to complete a Master's thesis and then reapply to the PhD program.

PART IV. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

i. Stipend and Tuition Scholarship Overview

Most of the students in the graduate program receive financial support on an academic-year (12-month) basis in the form of a stipend and full tuition scholarship provided by the Department and University, though occasionally a student is self-funded through an external fellowship (e.g. NSF Fellowship), traineeship (e.g. EPA traineeship), or grant through their faculty advisor. Financial support from the institution is limited to a maximum of two academic years for a M.S. student. The student may receive an additional semester or year of support if external funding, such as a grant, scholarship, or fellowship is obtained by the student or faculty advisor. Students who receive a stipend and tuition scholarship must be enrolled full-time (i.e. registered for a minimum of 12 graduate credits each semester) and are expected to take part in departmental events and training applicable to graduate student success, including teaching, assisting with field work or field trips, grant writing, and attending guest speaker presentations. Being awarded financial support beyond the first year is contingent upon making satisfactory research progress, submitting grant proposals, enrolling in required coursework, obtaining acceptable grades in lecture and laboratory courses, completing assigned Graduate Assistant duties, completing the annual report, and meeting with the Graduate Director and Academic Director at the end of the first year.

ii. Stipend and Tuition Scholarship Information

Graduate Assistantship (GA)

A Graduate Assistantship provides a student with a 12-month stipend of \$20,750 for the first and second years in the program. The annual stipend is divided into two parts; \$15,750 is paid in bi-weekly increments over fall and spring terms and the remaining \$5,000 is disbursed to the student typically as a lump sum at the beginning of summer term. A payment schedule and any specific stipend-related information is provided to students individually by the Academic Director prior to fall semester. Students and their advisors are encouraged to seek additional summer funding through a grant or fellowship (e.g. the University Research Council, which is outlined in more detail below).

There are two forms of Graduate Assistantships: A Teaching Assistantship and a Research Assistantship.

Teaching Assistantship (TA) – A TA is a professional academic appointment. Students receiving a teaching assistantship are expected to assist with teaching one or more classes or laboratory sections per semester. The expectation is that the recipient will gain useful experience as an instructor of Earth Science and improve their general communication skills. Graduate TAs are assigned to specific courses by the Academic Director, with direction from individual graduate students, the Graduate Director, and faculty. TAs are typically assigned to a variety of courses throughout their time in the program in order to provide a diverse teaching experience and to even out possible inequities in workload. Any questions about TA assignments should be brought to the attention of the Academic Director.

The Graduate School mandates that a TA can work no more than 20 hours per week. All work assignments should relate specifically to the course to which the TA is assigned. Teaching assistant duties may include:

- Preparation and presentation of lectures and laboratories in undergraduate courses.
- Assisting in the preparation of teaching materials for lecture and laboratories.
- Assisting in the preparation and proctoring of examinations.
- Assisting in the grading of exams, homework, and laboratory exercises.
- Assisting in audio-visual presentation of class materials.
- Assisting with activities during lectures or laboratories.

- Participating in field trips, which may occur outside of regularly scheduled class time.
- Tutoring and advising students on a one-to-one basis.
- Maintaining regular office hours.

Students are strongly encouraged to keep track of their hours and assigned duties, and to speak with the Graduate Director, Academic Director, or Department Head if there are concerns about workload.

Research Assistantship (RA) – A student may be assigned as an RA if the student’s advisor has appropriate financial support, which is typically an external grant. RA duties involve lab or field work assigned by the faculty advisor related to the specific research project the grant is funding. An RA should be assigned no more than 20 hours of work per week. Depending on the stipulations of the source grant, an RA may have a stipend higher than the base stipend of \$20,750 defined by the Department. Stipends paid from a grant are processed through payroll on a 12-month schedule.

Tuition Scholarship

A University-funded tuition scholarship is provided to students serving as TAs and RAs. The scholarship covers full-time tuition and most fees, except for the Information Technology and Instructional Equipment (ITIE) fee, UC Student Health Insurance Plan fee, and the International Student fee (for international students only), which are assessed each semester. A student who has waived student health insurance will pay only the ITIE fee of \$184 per semester. A student who has enrolled in student health insurance will be responsible for paying the student health insurance fee (the cost of student health insurance is decreased by applying for the GSHI award (see below in part iii)) and the ITIE fee. International students will pay an additional \$125 per semester (fall and spring) each year for the International Student fee.

iii. Additional Financial Assistance Sources

Outlined below are additional sources of financial assistance available to students during their time in the graduate program.

Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHI) award - Students who enroll in the UC Student Health Insurance plan are strongly encouraged to apply for the GSHI award (<https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/awards/gshi.html>), provided by the Graduate School. The award is applied as a credit to your student account in Catalyst. The amount provided from one year to the next varies, but the award decreases the cost of student health insurance up to 75%. The student must apply for this award prior to the start of fall term each year.

Departmental Funds for Research and Travel - The Department provides a one-time award of \$350 to a Master’s student, which can be used for research-related travel, research supplies, or analytical costs. The Department also provides a \$300 award *per year* to those students who are traveling to present at a professional meeting. Please see the Business Manager for detailed information on obtaining these funds.

Graduate Student Government (GSG) Awards and Fellowships – The GSG provides awards of up to \$500 per year for conference travel for both presenting and non-presenting students. They also provide excellence awards and research fellowships. More information is provided on their website, <https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/awards/gsga-awards.html>.

University Research Council (URC) Fellowships – The University Research Council has awards of up to \$7,500 available, including summer stipend and research support (<https://research.uc.edu/funding/overview>).

Other Award Opportunities Provided by the Graduate School – The Graduate School has a website (<https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/awards.html>) devoted to the various University, College, and Graduate School awards available to graduate students, such as the Yates Scholarship, Provost Graduate Fellowship, and Excellence in Teaching awards.

External Funding Opportunities – Master’s students are encouraged to seek research and travel funding from a variety of external sources, including the Geological Society of America (GSA), American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), and Sigma Xi. It is important for a student to seek guidance from their faculty advisor and committee members as to which external funding sources are applicable to their research.

iv. Outside Employment

Stipend and tuition support is an investment made by the Department of Geosciences and the University of Cincinnati in its graduate students and their research with the understanding that the student’s focus will be devoted to the pursuit of their graduate degree. It is, therefore, expected that students will not hold outside employment while in residence at UC.

PART V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

i. General Departmental Duties

All students receiving financial support from the Department may be called upon to carry out general departmental duties in addition to assigned TA and RA duties. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assistance with weekly colloquia.
- Assistance with the annual Career Days event.
- Meeting with alumni and other visitors to the Department.
- Attending presentations given by visitors outside of scheduled colloquia.
- Attending thesis and dissertation defenses of fellow graduate students.
- Mentoring undergraduate students.

ii. Office Space

Active graduate students (i.e. those who are enrolled and receiving stipend and tuition funding) will be provided with office space. Each student is assigned office space by the Academic Director. A student may request a particular office location and the request will be fulfilled if possible. A student may remain in the same office space from one year to the next, but this is not guaranteed. Student are asked to respect their office space and keep their desk space tidy. If a student does not adhere to these expectations, office space privileges may be revoked.

iii. Keys

Each student who is actively working towards degree completion will be assigned keys. A student should only be in possession of the keys he or she is assigned and should not lend or give keys to another student. Students are assigned keys that gain access to the main office, classrooms, requested labs, and office space. Keys are ordered in the main office by the student worker or Academic Director. The student will be charged \$20 per key through Catalyst if keys are not picked up within two weeks of being ordered or keys are lost and must be reordered. Upon degree completion, all assigned keys are to be returned to Edwards Hall.

iv. Other Information Related to the University and Graduate School

The student is encouraged to view the Graduate Student Handbook (<https://grad.uc.edu/fac-staff/handbook.html>) provided by the Graduate School, which details University-level requirements and policies that apply to all graduate students at the University of Cincinnati.

PART VI. APPENDICES

Forms referred to above are provided on the following pages:

Appendix 1 – Proto-Committee Form

Appendix 2 – Annual Report

FIRST SEMESTER PROTO-COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Early during the first term in residence, each graduate student will consult with their faculty advisor to choose a three-person proto-committee. This committee consists of the faculty advisor, a departmental faculty member with related research interests, and a departmental faculty member who adds breadth of knowledge outside of the student's main research area. For Master's students, the proto-committee may translate into the three-person thesis committee, which is to be established by the end of the first semester in residence. For PhD students, proto-committee members may carry over to the five-person dissertation committee, which is to be established by the end of the second semester in residence.

The proto-committee will meet with the student to discuss the student's research and academic goals, interests, strengths, and weaknesses. The goal of this committee is to help the student develop an initial research and academic plan, including recommended courses, research activities, and milestones to be met that will guide the student toward a timely and successful Master's thesis or PhD dissertation defense. Prior to the meeting, the student should send their CV and transcript(s) to the proto-committee members. Possible talking points during the meeting include, "What is your background in geoscience?", "What are your long-term career goals?", "Are you aware of any gaps in your academic training that you would like to fill?", "Do you have any questions for the members of your proto-committee?"

Student's Name:

Degree:

Proto-committee Members:

Recommended Coursework: The committee should recommend courses that would provide the student with a solid foundation in their area of research and to fill any gaps in knowledge necessary for successful thesis and dissertation completion and defense. Recommendations should be made based on previous courses taken, the student's own academic assessment, and the student's research direction.

Recommended research activities for the first year:

Additional milestones that should be met in order to prepare for a timely defense:

Recommended additional activities, skills, and experiences that will help the student become a well-rounded geoscientist:

Meeting Date:

Faculty advisor name and signature:

Each member of the proto-committee should be sent a copy of this completed document. The faculty advisor will upload this document to the shared "Proto-committee Summary" folder in OneDrive.

M.S. ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

This form is required of all students in the Geology M.S. program to remain in good academic standing. The form must be submitted by continuing students to be eligible for summer financial support and by those students in their final year in order to graduate. Please complete the form (sections may be expanded as necessary), then send it to your advisor for review and comments. The advisor then uploads the form to the OneDrive folder "Graduate Student Annual Reports" by April 1.

Name:

Date:

Program Entry Term:

Date committee established:

Members of committee:

Approval submitted for external member(s) (if applicable)? Yes No

Committee meeting dates Fall Semester: Spring semester:

Month/year planned for final defense:

Provide a summary of research progress this academic year:

Courses taken this academic year (list grade earned for lecture- and lecture/lab-based courses):

Professional development participation (workshops, abstracts, publications, presentations, meetings attended, etc.):

Funding applied for and outcome of proposal(s):

Outreach and community service participation:

Activities related to building and strengthening a mentor network:

Advisor's comments (may add comments from committee members on their behalf):

According to the advisor, the progress of the student this academic year has been:

Excellent (exceeding expectations)

Good (on schedule/meeting expectations)

Satisfactory (meeting most expectations with minor issues)

Unsatisfactory (not meeting expectations)

Name of advisor and date:

Name of Graduate Director and date of review: