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GUIDELINES FOR GEOSCIENCE M.S. STUDENTS UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

GENERAL INFORMATION

This document delineates the policies and procedures under which graduate student's seeking an M.S. degree function within the Department of Geoscience. The Department recognizes that graduate study is much more than the meeting of mechanical deadlines, and the scholarly development of graduate students is of paramount concern to the faculty. Each student's growth is cultivated individually throughout the graduate experience as one attains the foundation, independence, intellectual curiosity, and self-discipline necessary to be a productive scientist. The awarding of the M.S. in Geoscience recognizes the achievement of these goals.

INTRODUCTION

The Graduate College sets forth policies and deadlines in the Graduate College Catalog, which govern all graduate students at UNLV. New graduate students will follow the 2005-2007 edition of the Graduate Catalog. With department **and** Graduate College approval, the Graduate Catalog in effect during the semester in which degree requirements are completed may be used. In addition, the Department of Geoscience has developed the following guidelines, which are in some cases more rigorous and rigid than those of the Graduate College. These guidelines were generated in order to establish a framework that will assure uniformly high standards throughout the Department and that will permit the best possible education for Geoscience M.S. students. Each student is obligated to be aware of both sets of policies and to review them periodically so that they are followed to the best of each student's ability. It should be understood that the policies of both the Graduate College and of the Department are somewhat flexible and written petitions for exceptions may be submitted for special cases in which extenuating circumstances occur. However, petitions for departures from the rules and guidelines must be approved in writing by the advisor, committee, Graduate Coordinator and Department of Geoscience Chair. If the petitions are granted, the policies may be modified, but students should not and can not rely on such a mechanism to circumvent the regulations. Questions regarding any of the policies can and should be addressed by the student's advisor, the Department Chair or the Department Graduate Coordinator. If the information provided by these sources within the Department is not satisfactory, M.S. students should make an appointment with either the Dean or Associate Dean of the Graduate College in order to have questions answered. Do not rely on hearsay information: see it in writing.

ADMISSIONS TO THE GEOSCIENCE M.S. PROGRAM

The establishment of standards of admission to graduate programs at UNLV is largely the responsibility of the Graduate College. Therefore, M.S. students should refer to the appropriate general section in the Graduate Catalog, but also be cognizant of the introductory section to Geoscience. When the Graduate College receives the credentials of an applicant, the Department will recommend that the applicant either be denied admission or admitted with one of the

following classifications: (1) graduate standing, (2) graduate provisional, (3) contingency admit or (4) non-degree student. For either of the first two classifications there may be deficiencies listed or graduate course work specified. Contingency admission is given when additional admission materials are needed. **It is the student's responsibility to comply with the terms of admission.** Questions should be addressed to the Department's Graduate Coordinator. Students must make their advisor aware of admission conditions.

Review of applicants for admission includes evaluation of previous grade point average (GPA), courses taken, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, and students' statements of interests. The Department generally requires a grade point average of "B" or better for admission with graduate standing. Students with less than a "B" average may be admitted if supporting data (letters of recommendation, Graduate Record Examination, publications, etc.) are sufficiently strong. GRE scores should be average or better and letters of recommendation should be positive. Applicants must have completed a Bachelor's Degree in geoscience or a related discipline. The department offers Master's degrees in Geoscience with emphases in Geology, Geophysics, Soil Science, and Hydrogeology. The requirements for admission without deficiencies are listed in the Graduate Catalog. For the Geology emphasis, the Geoscience Department requires that, at minimum, the student has taken at least six of the following eight classes or their equivalent: GEOL 220/221 Mineralogy – Optical, GEOL 301 Fossil Record, GEOL 330 Geochemistry, GEOL 333 Geomorphology, GEOL 341 Structural Geology, GEOL 348 Field Geology I, GEOL 426 Igneous and Metamorphic Petrology, and GEOL 462 Stratigraphy and Sedimentology. In addition, a student must have taken an introductory geology class or they may be required to T.A. GEOL 101 after admission. Specific requirements for the Geophysics, Soil Science, and Hydrogeology emphases are listed in the Graduate Catalog. A student also must have taken at least 22 semester credits in supporting sciences, which include chemistry, computer programming, mathematics (calculus or a higher level), physics and statistics.

The admissions recommendation made by the Department to the Graduate College may be rejected if it is judged to conflict with Graduate College standards. Students with a field(s) of interest that is consistent with a field of research emphasized by a departmental faculty member will be considered for admission, if that discipline currently does not have enough participating graduate students to be considered filled.

In order for a currently admitted graduate student to change from one department to another department or program, the student must submit a new application for admission, the required application fee, and all necessary credentials to the Graduate College. Upon admission, the student must withdraw in writing from the original department.

ADMISSION CONTINGENCIES

Admission contingencies vary with each student and many students have none. The Department and Graduate College must receive all materials required at the time of matriculation no later than the end of the first semester. Progress toward completion of deficiencies noted at the time of matriculation should start in the first semester and be continuous until completed. Deficiencies must be completed as soon as possible.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Introduction

Financial support may be obtained from a variety of sources: (1) assistantships granted by the Graduate College upon the recommendation of the Department, (2) fellowships and scholarships awarded by the Graduate College or UNLV, (3) fellowships, scholarships, and assistantships sponsored by extra-university individuals and organizations that are awarded directly by the Department, Desert Research Institute (DRI) or the Harry Reid Center (HRC), (4) grants-in-aid of research awarded by both on-campus and off-campus organizations, (5) research assistantships provided to support funded research, and in rare cases (6) student can be admitted self-funded. **New students desiring financial support as a teaching or research assistant must have applications on file in the Graduate College by February 1st in order to be considered for support during Fall semester and students wishing to be supported in Spring semester must have applications on file by Oct. 1st of the preceding year.** Continuing students who have already been granted financial support and desire to have their support renewed must notify the departmental Graduate Coordinator. **It is the responsibility of the student to follow all guidelines related to their financial support.**

Teaching Assistantships

The Graduate College allocates state-funded graduate assistantships to the colleges, which are then distributed to the departments. Because the Geoscience Department has a small number of these assistantships, positions are commonly used for graduate students teaching in undergraduate laboratory sessions. Once students have applied for the assistantships, it is the responsibility of the Department to recommend to the Graduate College which applicants should receive available positions. The initial award of an assistantship does not assure the recipient of continuous support until a degree is attained. However, the Department attempts to continue support for initially funded master's candidates for two academic years under the conditions that a student performs duties satisfactorily and maintains satisfactory academic progress, and as long as the department has positions and funds. The expected performance of M.S. assistants is described subsequently. See the Graduate Catalog for additional guidelines on assistantships.

Fellowships

At present all fellowships available to M.S. students are awarded by the Graduate College and the UNLV President's Office. **Applications are typically due in the Graduate College or President's Office around February 1st.** Students who receive these awards usually have a 3.5 minimum GPA, high scores on the GRE and strong letters of support from faculty. If awarded a fellowship, a student receives a full academic-year stipend and tuition waiver, must enroll for at least 9 credit hours each semester of the Fellowship year, and must devote full time to academic studies. Additional guidelines for fellowships are listed under Scholarships in the Graduate Catalog and on the UNLV web pages.

Research Assistantships

Typically these positions are funded by extra-university agencies, but are administered through the Graduate College. The duties are controlled directly by the grantee, usually a

graduate faculty member. The grantee and the Graduate Coordinator review graduate applicant files and the work of continuing students in the field of interest and select whom to award the positions. These positions carry the same rules and regulations as teaching assistantships, but the type of work required depends on the research project. The student is directly responsible to the grantee whether in the Department or at research units such as DRI or HRC. Students working as research assistants may be fortunate enough to work directly on their thesis project but commonly may work on research not directly related to their thesis. Because of the uncertainties of extra-university funding, research assistantships may be granted on a year-by-year basis. See the Graduate Catalog for more guidelines.

Other Financial Support

Money is available from a variety of sources to supplement student income and to defray some of the costs of thesis research and preparation. Students may apply for scholarships through the Graduate College. Students must submit the FAFSA form to Financial Services each year in order to be considered for these scholarships. The UNLV Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) awards grants-in-aid of research twice a year. Students must contact the organization directly. Additional forms of financial aid are listed in the Graduate Catalog.

Information is available within the Department related to applying for research support from Sigma Xi, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), the Society of Sedimentary Geology (SEPM), and the Geological Society of America (GSA), all of which award grants-in-aid of student research in geoscience. A student's advisor or the Graduate Coordinator can provide information regarding these applications. Many of them require a short proposal regarding the thesis project and deadlines occur throughout the year.

Scholarship money is also available within the Department. These awards are typically given to students in the earlier stages of their program (i.e. approximately the initial year for M.S. students) and are intended primarily to support fieldwork and data collection phases of research. Award of these scholarships is based on a balance of academic performance, research progress and financial need. Scholarships are designed to provide partial support; students are expected to also pursue other funding. To be eligible for one of these scholarships, a M.S. student must file a departmental application and have filed a FAFSA with financial services. Other requirements are spelled out on the application form. For questions related to scholarships talk directly to the faculty chair of the committee. The deadline for applying is approximately January 31 each year.

REQUIRED AND EXPECTED PERFORMANCE OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Details regarding graduate assistantships (teaching and research assistantships) are outlined in the Graduate Catalog and students are responsible for knowing the requirements and expectations. Graduate assistants are to be available for work from one week prior to the start of Fall classes through Fall finals and from the day after the New Years holiday through Spring final examinations. Graduate assistants should expect to work on average 20 hours per week. New graduate assistants are expected, as part of their contractual obligations, to attend all orientation events that pertain to them (the Graduate Coordinator will notify them in advance).

These sessions are offered at the beginning of each fall semester. Also, helpful suggestions sometimes can be obtained through the GPSA. If a student is supported as a teaching assistant they must keep in contact with the professor in charge of the assigned class and with the Graduate Coordinator of the Department who may assign additional tasks within the scope of the T.A. position. Research assistants must contact the graduate faculty member in charge of funding the assistantship. Research assistants are guided by the same rules and regulations as teaching assistants, and consequently they may be asked to perform departmental duties as well as research.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

The Department of Geoscience adheres to the academic policies outlined in the Graduate Catalog and each student should be thoroughly familiar with them. A key policy that all graduate students in Geoscience must adhere to is the "College of Sciences Statement of Policy on Plagiarism". This policy is appended to this document.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Every semester the graduate faculty members of the Department evaluate the progress of each student in the program. Students and their advisors receive an evaluation from the Graduate Coordinator after the end of each semester. Any incomplete tasks/classes or unsatisfactory remarks must be addressed. The department's policy on evaluation of a student's progress and the resulting actions are outlined below.

Satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress of M.S. students in the Department of Geoscience

1. The graduate faculty members of the Department of Geoscience review each M.S. student at the end of each semester. Every student is individually notified regarding his or her progress in the M.S. program. Students should be familiar with both the Graduate College and the departmental policies that the faculty will follow in making their decisions.
2. Evaluation of a student's progress is in the following areas: contingencies/deficiencies at the time of matriculation; filing of a degree program, committee form and thesis prospectus with the Graduate College; filing a thesis proposal with the department; course grades; thesis work; and performance as a Graduate Assistant, if funded. Specifics regarding each of these topics are contained in the following sections.
3. If a student is making unsatisfactory progress, the student may be separated from the program or put on probation. The problems or requirements stated in the letter to the student must be corrected or fulfilled during the first semester of probation. If they are not, or if there is further unsatisfactory progress during any subsequent semester, the student will be placed on a second semester of probation during which time the student is not eligible for an assistantship or scholarship from the department or university. If, at

the end of the second semester of probation, the student's progress remains unsatisfactory, then the student will be separated from the program.

4. If a student regards the faculty's decision or treatment as unjust, a request may be made of one's advisor, the department chair, or the Graduate Coordinator to call a meeting of the graduate faculty. The student will present the case in writing to the faculty one week prior to the meeting and may choose to be present at the beginning of the meeting for discussion of the situation. The graduate faculty members will deliberate the case without the student being present and, within one week, render their decision in writing. If a student continues to reject the faculty's findings, a grievance may be pursued through university channels.

THESES

Students are urged to download the Guide to Preparing & Submitting a Thesis or Dissertation manual from the Graduate College's web page when the thesis is about to be written. Each student must follow these guidelines to the letter or the Graduate College will not accept the thesis. Questions may be addressed to the student's advisor or the Thesis Director at the Graduate College.

M.S. students should have extensive discussions with their advisors and possibly their committees before embarking on writing a thesis. Every advisor follows a different procedure depending on the project undertaken and the capabilities of the student. Remember that a thesis need not be a long document. M.S. thesis lengths are variable, but as a guide, about thirty-fourty double-spaced type written pages with additional pages for figures, references, and appendices are adequate. The Geoscience Department faculty will consider manuscripts suitable for submittal to a journal for a M.S. thesis as well. The writing style should be equivalent to one in a professional journal: the department requires GSA Bulletin format style for non-manuscript theses. Recently completed theses can be used as guides, but realize that they are of variable quality.

For guidance, we suggest that student's have a completed first draft of the text, figures and maps to the advisor no later than February 1st for May graduation, no later than March 1 for an August graduation, and no later than September 1st for a December graduation. A student's advisor may have read sections of text prior to those dates, but these deadlines are aimed at a completed draft. The advisor should have at least two weeks to read and comment on the student's work. Remember that the faculty members have other teaching and research commitments, and other graduate students. Each student must be prepared to make numerous revisions quickly and return the revised drafts to the advisor until achieving a draft that the advisor deems acceptable to be distributed to the committee members. Remember that the advisor may need two weeks to reread each draft submitted. Depending on the advisor's comments, it may be helpful to set a tentative defense date with all committee members to obtain a realistic view of their schedules. Also at this time, the M.S. student should advise committee members of progress so the committee can be aware that they may soon receive a draft of the thesis. Committee members may outline their time constraints to the student (i.e. meetings, field trips, etc.). The Graduate College representative committee member may choose to see the first

draft or perhaps only the defensible copy: ascertain their input and keep them apprised as appropriate. Once a student's committee has read the thesis, which includes nearly final figures, maps, and text, they may suggest revisions and wish to see revised drafts before they move to approve it as a defensible thesis. Any suggested revisions should be discussed with the committee member and advisor. It is the obligation of the committee chair to reconcile differences of opinion with regard to content and organization of the thesis. This is achieved most constructively through meetings of the candidate with the committee.

Students writing a thesis that is a manuscript to be submitted to a journal for publication must have the thesis reviewed and approved by the thesis committee **prior** to submitting the manuscript to the journal. Committee approval may require editing and revisions. Two weeks should be provided to the committee to review the manuscript.

Once the committee has deemed a draft as defensible, the student must make any final changes and display the draft in the Department office for one week prior to the final examination. This displayed copy should be nearly a final version. The text should be free of grammatical and typographical errors, and figures and maps should be drafted and very near their final form, so that any person who wishes to read it before the exam can do so easily.

After passing the final exam (which includes the defense of research), where yet other changes to the thesis may be suggested, the final document should be quickly prepared. Present this document with additional cover sheets to all committee members for their final approval and signature.

Two copies of the thesis, unbound and signed by all members of the examination committee, must be deposited in the Graduate College office in final form at least two weeks prior to the end of instruction within the term in which the student will graduate. The Graduate Dean must give permission for extension of this deadline in writing. The Department strongly recommends adhering to the deadline and only under exceptional circumstances will it support the request to the Dean.

In addition to the two copies of the final thesis required by the Graduate College, the Department requires that two unbound copies be submitted to the Department Chair or office staff when the document is submitted for the Chair's signature. One of these copies should be on high-quality paper. These copies will remain in the Department office for immediate use and photocopying. It is considered proper conduct to also give a bound copy to the advisor at this time. The Department usually pays the cost of binding departmental copies.

FINAL EXAMINATION

The regulations for the final examination, or defense, for Masters candidates are discussed in the Graduate Catalog and should be read by every candidate. The Department adheres to the general guidelines of the Graduate College. The exam must occur no later than three weeks before the end of classes in the semester in which the student wishes to graduate. It should not be scheduled during school holidays, weekends, or the summer unless all committee members agree in advance. The composition of the committee shall not be changed to facilitate scheduling during these periods.

In detail, the format of the final examination in Geoscience is as follows. During the time in which the final exam is scheduled, the candidate presents, in a professional manner, an oral

summary of the thesis stressing the major conclusions of the research. The presentation should be about 25 minutes in length and may not exceed 45 minutes. This presentation must be open to a public audience including non-graduate faculty, students, and interested people from the community and must include all members of the examining committee. Following the presentation, the public audience may ask questions related to the thesis. During this time, the graduate faculty and particularly the examining committee should refrain from questioning the candidate. At the end of this brief discussion period, the public audience will be excused. As specified in the Graduate Catalog, the candidate will be fully examined with only graduate faculty members present unless the student's committee has unanimously approved the presence of other individuals. It is during this questioning period that the student must be able to defend the findings and methodology of the thesis and to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of a broad field of study as well as a detailed understanding of a more limited field.

After completion of the question and answer period, the student will be dismissed, and the examination committee will evaluate the student's performance with the advice and consultation of any other graduate faculty members that may be present. As noted in the Graduate Catalog, "The advisory committee must unanimously pass the student. If the committee votes unanimously to fail the student or the vote is not unanimous to pass, the student, in conjunction with his/her advisor, may request the committee to administer a second examination. The student must wait at least three months before taking the second examination. The Department may require additional course work, substantial reworking of the thesis or whatever is believed necessary to prepare the student for the second examination." At the conclusion of the committee deliberation, the committee should complete and sign the "Final Examination for Advanced Degree" form for the Graduate College and discuss their conclusions with the student.

To prepare for this examination, a student is advised to review all graduate course work, all details of the thesis, and all current literature related to the thesis and their field of interest. The committee will be examining to ascertain whether the student has developed a sufficient foundation with both depth in their research and breadth in geoscience. The student may be called upon to extend one's knowledge beyond "what one knows" by testing the use of sound scientific reasoning, or the candidate may be asked to state an opinion regarding particular papers or theories to test whether the candidate possesses the ability to be critical of our science. An M.S. student should be in his/her most alert and educationally honed state to pass this final examination, which is only in part a thesis defense.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED AFTER ADMISSION

Introduction

As a full-time graduate student seeking a Master of Science degree (particularly if a student is funded through the Department, DRI, HRC, or the Graduate College), **each student's goal should be to complete the M.S. degree within two years.** The regulations are structured for a two-year degree program, as are departmental funding and assignment of office space. If a student enters the program with deficiencies or works full-time, it is likely that additional time will be needed to complete the requirements. However, departmental funding may not be extended.

All M.S. students must complete the degree within six years (or lose credit) and be continuously enrolled in accordance with Graduate College guidelines, as outlined in the "Academic Policies" section of the Graduate Catalog. Part-time students should take special note of these regulations.

Prior to the beginning of the first semester

Prior to enrolling for the first semester, a new M.S. student must confer with the Graduate Coordinator and with the advisor listed on the admission form who has been chosen based on each student's statement of interest. During the meeting, it will be decided which courses should be taken the first semester. GEOL 701 and 795 must be taken during the first year (GEOL 701 for Fall admission and GEOL 795 for Spring admission), as well as some of the deficiencies or graduate courses that may be listed on a student's admission form.

During all semesters prior to the final one

Each student is expected to register for a minimum of three semester hours of graduate credit each semester (summers excluded). However, students intending to complete, defend, submit a thesis to the Graduate College, and/or graduate during the summer term must be registered for a minimum of 3 credits. Students who hold graduate assistantships are required by the Graduate College to register for a minimum of 6 semester hours of credit each semester; the department of Geoscience recommends that graduate assistants register for 9 credits, including thesis credits, each semester. Graduate students who are working on a thesis must register for a minimum of 3 semester hours of credit each semester (these may be non-thesis credits) until the thesis is completed, submitted to the Graduate College, and the student graduates. In rare cases a student may be permitted to complete the thesis in absentia waiving the registration requirement. Students must petition the Graduate College for approval. If approved, the advisor, Graduate Dean, along with the student will determine the requirements for completion of the work. A minimum of 6 thesis credit hours is required for graduation. Important thesis information is available in the "Academic Policies" section of the Graduate Catalog. A student must be continuously enrolled in the department while pursuing a master's degree. If for some reason the student can not actively participate in course work or thesis research, then the student should seek a "leave of absence" from the Graduate College. Students who are not registered for academic work within a calendar year are separated from the graduate program and will need to reapply for admission to the Graduate College should they wish to continue. Exceptions to the above policy, as with a request for a leave of absence, are made only in advance with the approval of the student's advisor, Department Chair, Academic Dean, and the Graduate Dean. Such a leave does not extend the six-year completion date, but may serve to avoid probation or separation from the program because of unsatisfactory progress. Additional guidelines on Probation and Separation are provided in the Graduate Catalog.

Whether completing a thesis within two or six years, if a student anticipates consultation with departmental faculty or use of Department facilities to conduct research or for the preparation of a proposal, then the student must enroll in thesis credit hours reflecting the amount of faculty time and facility use. Before enrolling for thesis credit hours, the student's advisor must be consulted to determine the amount and type of work expected to be complete for a specified number of credits during a given semester. This should be viewed as a contract, and

the advisor will judge each semester whether or not the stated work was completed. Such work will be a criterion used in the evaluation of satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress of a graduate student.

During the final semester

Each student must (1) apply for graduation and pay fees prior to the deadline listed in the class schedule for each term; (2) allow *at least* two weeks for the committee to examine the thesis, prior to scheduling the final examination (*thesis must be submitted to the committee no less than eight weeks prior to the last day of instruction in the term in which the student will graduate*); (3) obtain a statement from all committee members that they deem the written thesis defensible; (4) schedule the final examination with the committee; (5) deposit the defensible thesis draft in the departmental office one week prior to the final exam, and notify the faculty of its presence and the date, time, and place of the exam; (6) pass the final examination no later than three weeks before the end of any given semester or term; (7) submit two signed unbound copies of the thesis (at least one original on high-quality paper) and the information required for GEOREF to the Department office staff; and (8) deposit two signed, unbound copies of the thesis in the Graduate College two weeks before the end of classes. Students must be enrolled during the semester/term the examination is taken.

Students are advised to determine the deadline dates, verify them, and mark them on a calendar. The most difficult deadlines for most M.S. students to meet are (1) the completion of a defensible thesis and (2) the completion of the thesis for deposition in the Graduate College. Remember that a student does not work alone, but relies on the efforts of four other very busy people: the committee. Therefore, plans must be discussed with the committee early. Read the guidance given above under Theses.

After all committee members are satisfied with the thesis, notify the Graduate College of the examination date. Remember that this must be done two weeks prior to the exam, and that two weeks must be allowed for the committee to evaluate the thesis prior to scheduling the exam. The final exam is open to all UNLV graduate faculty members. At least one week prior to the final exam and defense put the best and most complete copy of the defensible thesis in the departmental office for review by any faculty, student, or community member. Be sure to notify the Department faculty members in writing of its presence, and ensure that the date, time, and place of the exam are posted.

While the thesis is available for review in the office, the student should make final preparations for the final exam. The student should have been studying and preparing long before this week. Upon passing the final exam, make any needed changes in the thesis and submit the final document to the department and to the Graduate College. The student must also verify at this time that the Graduate College holds a "Final Examination for Advanced Degree" form that should have been submitted after the exam was passed and the final draft was approved. If they do not have this form, the student must see that it is submitted immediately or the student will not graduate.

Many of our M.S. students do not meet the deadlines for Spring graduation. If a student applied for Spring graduation and missed the deadlines, the student must reapply for August or December graduation and pay additional fees. If it is anticipated that a student will not finish in time for a Spring graduation, then the initial filing should be for August. Functionally, this

change only provides an extra month to work on the thesis. The student must discuss the expected schedule of events with the committee, and they must approve it. It is best if final exams for Fall graduation can be taken prior to the end of the Spring final exam period and a final draft of the thesis is ready for the committee to sign shortly thereafter. Remember, the University does not employ faculty members during the summer and many are away at meetings or doing field research on externally funded grants. Committee members may not be changed just to achieve an August graduation.

Students may not participate in Commencement prior to completing all degree requirements.

SELECTING A THESIS ADVISOR AND COMMITTEE

At the time of admission, new M.S. students are assigned an advisor based on their stated field of interest. This person may remain the advisor, but the student or the advisor may elect to change this arrangement. The student should talk to faculty members during the first semester to determine with whom they would like to work, and who wishes to supervise their research. Once this is settled, then the student and the advisor need to identify two additional committee members from within the Department that will best augment the research requirements and one graduate faculty member from another department to serve as the Graduate College representative. Both breadth and related expertise need to be balanced. If the identified faculty members are willing to serve, then they should be asked to sign the examining committee form. The M.S. student must talk to their Graduate College representative committee member and ask how much they wish to be involved in the program and progress and keep them apprised of progress. Students must submit the Appointment of Advisory Committee form to the Graduate College before establishing the degree program.

During a student's graduate study, the student or the advisor may choose to discontinue the relationship. Depending on the timing or cause for this change, the student may also have to change thesis topics and submit a new thesis proposal. Such changes are unusual, but do occur due to illness, sabbatical leave, or other problems. A change of advisor or any member of the committee must be approved by the Department as discussed earlier and submitted to the Graduate College for approval. No changes may occur during the final semester of the program.

DEGREE PROGRAM

The degree program outlines the courses the student will complete for the M.S. degree. It must be submitted to the Graduate College prior to the end of the second semester. Different rules pertain if the student is requesting that 12 or more graduate credits be accepted toward the degree program from studies prior to matriculation. In the latter case, the program must be submitted within six weeks of the beginning of the first semester (see associated form and review the Graduate Catalog). In addition, the Department requires that every student's assigned advisor, in conjunction with the Graduate Coordinator, approves a student's first semester classes before enrollment and that the assigned advisor or chosen thesis advisor approve the courses to be taken during the second semester. By the end of the second semester, the student must have an approved Degree Program signed by the advisor, approved by the examining committee, and

submitted to the Graduate College to be sure you are making satisfactory progress as a full-time M.S. student. The Department and the Graduate College may make minor changes in the Degree Program with advance approval.

The Degree Program does not include deficiencies listed at the time of admissions, although a student must take those classes. It does include 30 credit hours of graduate course work, some of which may be transferred from other colleges. Of the total, at least 18 credit hours must be in 700-level courses. They must include GEOL 701, GEOL 795, and six hours of GEOL 797 (thesis research and preparation). A student may enroll for more than six credit hours of GEOL 797, but a maximum of six can be counted on the Degree Program. All other course work must be 600 level or above to count toward the M.S. degree. The Department faculty strongly recommends that students take at least one class outside their major area of emphasis within Geoscience. M.S. students may take graduate-level courses offered by departments other than Geoscience. However, only a maximum of 6 non-Geoscience courses may be used toward a M.S. degree program.

THESIS PROPOSAL

The selection of the research problem is the responsibility of the individual student, not that of the faculty member with whom the student desires to work. However, input from a faculty member is required. In addition, a faculty member may decline to direct any individual's project. An M.S. student who has identified a research problem through discussion with an advisor should prepare a research proposal. A thesis proposal must be written and approved by the department. An approved abstract of the thesis project and a course of study must be submitted to the Graduate College as part of the Thesis Prospectus at the same time the degree program is submitted. Both the Prospectus and the Degree Programs must be submitted to the Graduate College before the end of the second semester. Any changes in Degree Program or thesis **MUST** be approved in advance by the student's committee and filed with the Graduate College.

Students are helped through the initial phases of the proposal in GEOL 701 and by working closely with an advisor. The proposal should be submitted to the student's advisor as early as possible, certainly before beginning the actual project, and well before the end of the student's second semester. A student's committee should meet in the second semester to hear a formal presentation of the proposal and to discuss the project, after having received the written proposal for comments at least one week prior to the meeting. Following the committee meeting, a student should revise the proposal, following the suggestions of the committee members. The written thesis proposal, when approved by the student's committee, must be duplicated and deposited in the department office for a two-week period excluding holidays and summer. The student must notify the Geoscience faculty members in writing that the proposal has been deposited for their review. Any faculty member may notify the student's committee in writing of any suggestions or why the faculty member does not believe the proposal should be approved. If a request for discussion is not received within two-weeks, the proposal is automatically approved. If any individual's objection to a proposal cannot be satisfied through the committee, the objection must be brought before the graduate faculty of the Department.

A thesis proposal submitted by a M.S. student in the Department of Geoscience should normally include a 250 word abstract, approximately six pages of double-spaced text plus supporting maps, graphs, tables, and references. All proposals must include a realistic budget and time schedule. The proposal must outline the problem concisely and clearly, with a statement of the problem to be addressed and the importance to the discipline, proposed methods of approach, and expected results or contribution to geoscience. The proposal should be sufficiently well documented with citations from pertinent literature to assure the faculty members that the student is aware of the work of other investigators in the proposed and related fields. Advisory committees should assist students in writing concise proposals and should consider proposals carefully before endorsing them.

Suggested format of the thesis proposal

1. Cover sheet required (see associated on-line forms)
2. Abstract - 250 words.
3. Proposal.
 - Text should clearly answer the following questions:
 - a. What is the hypothesis to be investigated or geologic problem to be solved?
 - b. Why is the subject significant?
 - c. How will the hypothesis be investigated or the geologic problem be solved?
4. References cited
5. Budget
6. Estimated time schedule

COURSE GRADES

Satisfactory progress includes maintaining a minimum of a 3.00 GPA in all graduate-level courses. One grade of B- is permitted in the courses listed on the degree program as long as the overall graduate GPA remains at or above 3.00. Receiving two grades of B- or lower or one grade of C+ or lower will place a student on probation even if the GPA remains above 3.00. The student will be removed from probation when the C+ is replaced with a B or higher grade in that course or that course is replaced on the degree program with a course having a grade of B or better, providing the GPA remains above 3.00. Receiving two grades of C+ or lower during the period of M.S. study will be grounds for automatic separation of the student from the M.S. program.

Any grade of incomplete received by an M.S. student must be completed within one semester or the student will be put on probation. If there are extenuating circumstances, an extension may be granted. Such an extension must be received in writing from the Graduate Coordinator or the chair of the department, with approval of the Graduate College.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES STATEMENT OF POLICY ON PLAGIARISM
Recommendations of the Graduate Affairs Council

Plagiarism is a very serious offense. Committing plagiarism may result in a student's expulsion from the university.

Definition of Plagiarism

To plagiarize is to steal and use (the ideas or writings of another) as one's own (American Heritage Dictionary, 1973:1001). There are many degrees of plagiarism -- e.g., wholesale verbatim use of paragraphs from published works without quotation marks, improper paraphrasing the structure and content of published work, to more subtle transgressions of statement of specific facts without references, acceptable only for common knowledge. Additionally, the more subtle forms of plagiarism may be specific to the norms of the discipline of study. Therefore, it follows that there are many levels of recourse that can be taken following an incident of plagiarism. Additionally, the severity of recourse is influenced by whether the student has a prior history of plagiarism.

Plagiarism on the UNLV Campus

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. According to NSHE code, Academic Policies of the UNLV Graduate Catalog, and UNLV Student Conduct Code, infractions of academic dishonesty are governed by Section 6 of the NSHE Code "Rules and Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the University Community". On the UNLV campus, the Vice President for Student Life is delegated the authority and responsibility to administer the Student Conduct Code, which supports Section 6 of above but is specific to student conduct. The faculty member who recognizes student plagiarism has the discretion to follow several courses of action including the issuing of a warning, a failing grade on the assignment, or a failing grade for the course. Alternatively, the faculty member may chose to initiate disciplinary review following the procedure outlined in the Student Conduct Code, that may result in a warning, probation, suspension, or expulsion for the student.

Toward the goal of maintaining an environment of academic integrity, community and pride in the College of Sciences, the following recommendations are made.

Education and Practice of Academic Integrity: Department/School and Student Responsibilities

Each Department/School in the College of Sciences is expected to inform incoming or new graduate students as to: (1) what constitutes plagiarism, (2) why plagiarism constitutes a breach of academic and scientific ethics and integrity and (3) what the ramifications are for plagiarism in an academic and scientific community and specifically at UNLV. This information may be disseminated in a mandatory first semester research/ethics course, seminar, or orientation

session. After receiving this information, graduate students are expected to maintain the highest levels of academic integrity while attending classes and conducting research at UNLV.

Response to Plagiarism: Department/School and Faculty Responsibilities

Each Department/School in the College of Sciences is expected to develop a set of procedures for faculty to follow that will allow (1) consistency but flexibility of action when a student is guilty of plagiarism and (2) tracking of incidents of plagiarism to help identify recurrence.

The College of Sciences recommends that the faculty member, upon the discovery of an incident of plagiarism and establishing guilt, should:

- (1) have a discussion with the student and student's Faculty Advisor regarding the plagiarism
- (2) copy the materials containing plagiarism and, following consultation with either the Chair or Graduate Coordinator, provide the materials to the Student Judicial Affairs officer, together with a memorandum justifying the accusation of plagiarism, and
- (3) proceed with a course of action commensurate with the level of plagiarism and any prior history, following discussion with the Graduate Coordinator and the Student Judicial Affairs Officer.

In all cases, the Student Judicial Affairs Officer should be consulted, and it is highly recommended that the student be required to meet with the officer. Involvement of the Student Judicial Affairs Officer does not remove the decision of a course of action from the Department/School, and allows tracking of recurrence without a prejudicial impact on the student. In some instances, a review by the student's standing Graduate Committee is necessary. It is recommended that an attempt be made to resolve the issue first by the Faculty Advisor and Graduate Coordinator. If this approach does not produce a satisfactory result, then the issue should be resolved by the student's Graduate Committee together with the Graduate Coordinator, and finally and if needed, by the Department/School faculty. The faculty may initiate disciplinary review in accordance with the Academic Policies of the UNLV Graduate Catalog, and "Rules and Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the University Community" of the NSHE Code. The student has the right to appeal the resulting decision following disciplinary review.