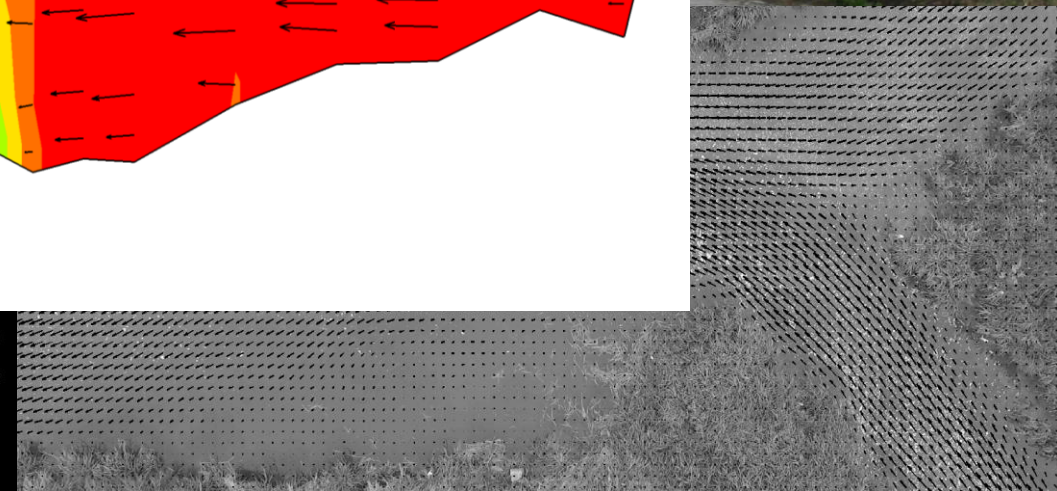
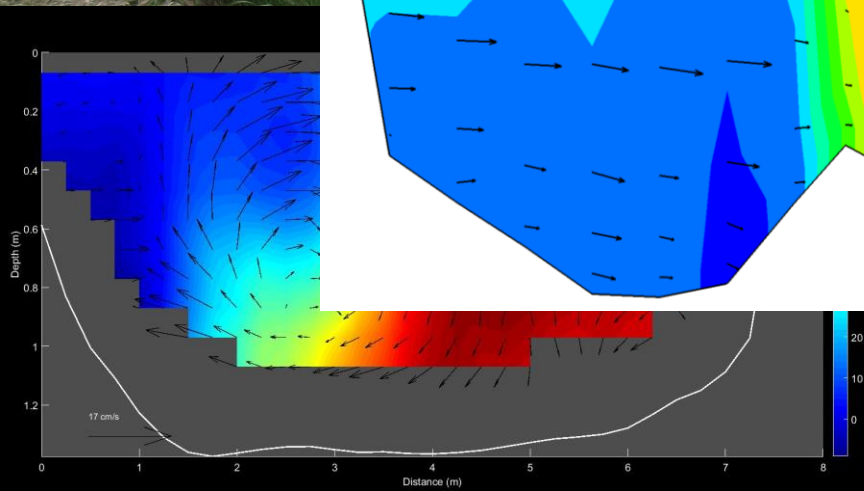
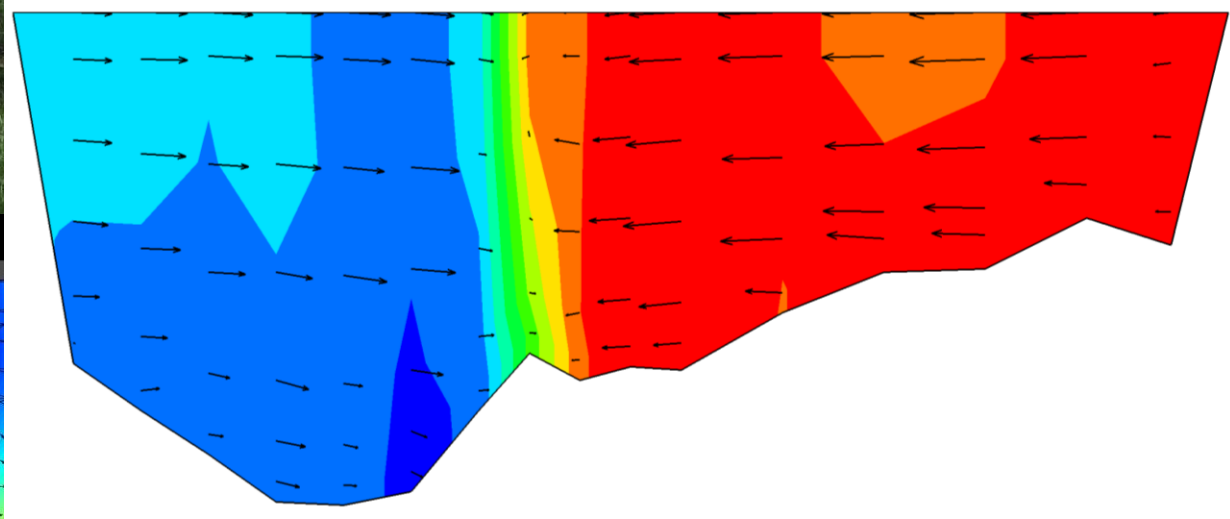


Graduate School - What, Why, When and How?





What Is Graduate School?

- Students attend graduate school to obtain advanced degrees (master's, PhD) having previously earned a bachelor's degree
- Master's degree programs:
 - usually take ≈ 2 years
 - involve taking advanced classes and learning/refining technical skills
 - may or may not require a thesis
- PhD programs:
 - sometimes, but not always, require having previously earned a master's
 - usually take 3+ years (in addition to time spent obtaining master's)
 - require a significant, original addition to the discipline (the dissertation)

Masters Degrees

- **Online master's/certificate**
 - Good for those with limited time or money, < 2 years
 - A leg up on competition in a flooded job market
 - May be considered negatively as a “master’s light” by some
- **Professional master's**
 - Good for those going into industry, business, management, government, < 2 years
 - Focuses on job training, technical/real work skills
 - Not for those who want a PhD
- **Traditional master's**
 - For those who wish to pursue a PhD or a career in research/science, ≈ 2 years
 - Non-thesis or thesis options, so this degree is pretty flexible

Postbaccalaureate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems

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OVERVIEW

COURSES

COSTS

FACULTY

HOW TO APPLY

CONTACT THE PROGRAM

STUDENT STORIES

IN THE NEWS

This is my Life



Paul Thur
Geographic Information Systems - GIS
(Postbaccalaureate Certificate)
McMurdo Station, Antarctica

The main appeal of it is that I can take the classes and be learning a new career while I'm here making money.

[READ MORE](#)

PENN STATE | ONLINE



Program Summary

A GIS Certificate

Penn State's GIS program offers a GIS certificate you can use in the field of

Traditional Track

This track is designed for users of GIS software and

- Take three required courses
- Choose one elective

The instructor-led courses

Experienced Professionals

If you are a certified or experienced user, you may select others more appropriate

- You can take the first two courses with a waiver for the other two
- If approved, you will receive credit for the first two courses
- Details are available in the program brochure

Geospatial Portfolio

Learn more about the

Ready for today's complex

THE ILLINOIS PSM
HELP YOU PREPARE

with science knowledge
and skills.

AT A GLANCE

Fall 2016 - On Campus
Events

Fri, 09/16/2016

Illinois PSM Campus
Recruiting Schedule Set
Wed, 09/14/2016

[view more](#)

Department | People | Graduate | Undergrad | Applied GIS Programs | Resources | Alumni & Friends

Graduate Program Information

Overview

The UW-Madison Department of Geography is a leader in the field of geography and offers exceptional opportunities for graduate education. The Department has been consistently rated as one of the best in the country and for over 100 years has been the training ground for generations of geographers.

Graduate study in the Geography Program is divided into four major thematic areas: Human Geography, Physical Geography, People-Environment, Cartography/GIS. In addition, students may focus on Area Studies and Global Systems as part of one of the thematic areas. The Geography Department faculty serves in prominent positions both within the University and in our larger professional communities. Our faculty have been recognized both by the university and within our profession with such honors as UW named chairs, and American Association of Geographers (AAG) lifetime achievement awards. We are also proud of the accomplishments of our graduates, many of whom have gone on to prominence within government, industry, and academia.

The Department of Geography offers four different degree programs:

- Master of Science (MS)
- Master of Science (MS) – Cartography/GIS (Thesis Option)
- Master of Science (MS) – Cartography/GIS (Professional Online Option)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) – Geography

[top](#)

204 Coble Hall 801 S. Wright Street

PhD Degrees

- For those who want to pursue a career in academia, professional research, high level management jobs, or senior business leadership positions
- PhD degrees are “terminal” in that, by obtaining a PhD, you are considered a world-wide expert in your topic
 - By definition, you “wrote the book” (dissertation) on the subject matter
 - This means that PhD degrees can lead to many different careers, but rarely are “required” for a chosen career (academia is the biggest exception to this point)

Why Graduate School?

- Master's
 - You know what career you want, and a master's is required
 - You feel it will make you more competent and competitive in a crowded field
 - You are already in a career, and want increased pay, respect, opportunities, or fulfillment
 - You are thinking of pursuing a PhD in the future
 - You are passionate about the subject matter
- PhD
 - You want a job in academia (professor, researcher) or another top-level career that requires it
 - You want to make a difference (help the environment, help children, help fight cancer...)
 - You are *very* passionate about the subject matter

Why *NOT* Graduate School?

- Master's
 - You aren't sure what to do after your undergraduate career or you like the safe feeling of being in school
 - You feel pressure from others
 - You don't fully understand the process
 - If the program is not funded by the University or an outside source
- PhD
 - If you are not absolutely sure you want to spend the rest of your life working in this field
 - If people in your “dream job” are not required to have a PhD
 - You can't take failure or criticism well
 - You aren't prepared to make sacrifices in other areas of your life (relationships, finances, free time...)
 - You don't fully understand the process
 - If the program is not funded by the University or an outside source

MARRIAGE vs. The Ph.D.



Marriage



Ph.D.

Typical Length:	7.5 years	7 years
Begins with:	A proposal	A thesis proposal
Culminates in a ceremony where you walk down an aisle dressed in a gown:	✓	✓
Usually entered into by:	Foolish young people in love	Foolish young people without a job
50% end in:	Bitter divorce	Bitter remorse
Involves exchange of:	Vows	Know-how
Until death do you part?	If you're lucky	If you're lazy

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM



Second result for “graduate school” on Google, titled “overloaded student in library”



THANKS TO MIGUEL...

JORGE CHAM ©THE STANFORD DAILY

When to attend Graduate School?

- If you decide to attend while still an undergraduate, talk to your academic advisor *as early as possible, even if you aren't completely sure*
- It is relatively uncommon to attend graduate school directly after finishing your undergraduate degree. Why?
 - It is a big commitment – many are “burnt out” after 4+ years
 - Many want to start working as soon as possible to make/save money or pay off debt
 - Not sure if they want to or not, and in what specific field
 - Those who do attend may have “tried” a different career, and decided it was not something they would be happy doing

How to attend Graduate School?

- Talk to your advisor, boss, contact, etc. for guidance!
- Say you want to start Fall semester, 2019. The typical timeline should be:
 - Identify what you want to do, with whom, and where (Spring 2017)*
 - Research programs, advisors, requirements, and prepare for GRE (Spring – Summer 2017)
 - Sign up for and take GRE (Fall 2017)
 - Finalize list of prospective schools, contact potential advisors, finalize application material (Fall 2017)
 - Apply (late Fall 2017 – early Spring 2018)
 - Await decisions and visit campuses (Spring 2018)

How to attend Graduate School?

- **Identify what you want to do, with whom, and where** – this is probably the most difficult part of applying to graduate school.
 - Topics?
 - Physical geography?
 - Human geography?
 - GIS?
 - Location?
 - Advisor?
 - Is s/he a big name that will open opportunities for you, but may not have time for you? Is s/he retiring soon and not taking new students? Is s/he known for a particular study, subject, method, or idea? Can you work with her/his personality and working style?
 - Contact them ahead of time!
-
- ```
graph TD; PG[Physical geography?] --> UG[Urban Geography]; HG[Human geography?] --> UG; UG --> UP[Urban Planning?]; UP --> TN[Transportation networks]; TN --> EC[Economics?]; EC --> YC[Your contribution!];
```
- Urban Geography
    - Megacities
      - Access to healthcare
      - Transportation networks
        - Bus systems and access
        - Effect of economy on car ownership
        - Your contribution!

# Summary: Grad School Pros/Cons

## Pros

- No tuition, paid a stipend, can defer student loan debt
- Opens up career possibilities and shift/alter current career path
- Better pay, eventually
- Intellectually and personally fulfilling
- What else?

## Cons

- Low pay during degree
- Takes significant amount of time
- May still not be able to get ideal job
- Stressful, difficult, high % of students do not finish (more striking for PhD students)
- PhD may over-qualify you for certain careers
- What else?

# Questions/Comments?

- Links of interest
  - [UWL Career Services](#)
  - [Grad school timeline](#)
  - [General grad school info](#)
  - [Some more pros and cons](#)

Thank you to one of our alumni (currently a graduate student)  
who developed this presentation