



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

## College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

*Department of Geography*

### Assessment Plan

Ph.D. in Geography  
2008

#### **I. Mission**

The Department of Geography offers courses of study leading to the Ph.D. degree with specialization in natural environmental systems, urban/economic geography, or geographic information science. The mission of the Ph.D. in Geography is to provide an advanced graduate education that prepares students for independent learning, critical thought, and scholarly contributions through original research, application, and teaching. Graduates of the program will have in-depth background in one or more substantive fields of the discipline, advanced research and spatial-analytic skills, and the ability to relate their geographic knowledge and skills to cognate fields.

#### **II. Student Learning Objectives**

The Ph.D. degree in Geography prepares students for careers in research, applied science and education. To succeed in these pursuits and contribute to the knowledge base of society, students must be able to formulate and conduct original research, collaborate with other researchers, critically evaluate and synthesize knowledge from various sources, communicate scholarship in oral, graphic and written form, and mentor others in the development of geographic knowledge and analytic skills.

Upon completion of the doctoral degree in Geography, students will:

1. Have an in-depth knowledge and mastery of scholarship in a major field of specialization (natural environmental systems, urban/economic geography, or geographic information science) and a related cognate field.
2. Be able to critically evaluate and utilize scientific literature from geography and cognate fields.
3. Recognize the contributions of others to knowledge and properly attribute the work of others in their own writing and presentations.
4. Demonstrate the ability to propose, initiate and conduct original, independent research.
5. Integrate the value and relevance of the geographic perspective into contemporary issues and demonstrate the ability to utilize geographic theory and methods in non-academic application.
6. Demonstrate the ability to communicate scholarship to the peer community through oral/graphic presentations.
7. Demonstrate the ability to give and receive critical feedback, utilize feedback to revise scholarly work, and engage in the processes of sharing scholarship in published form.
8. Demonstrate pedagogical skill in the development and teaching of course material in geography.



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## III. Methods

### a. Direct Evidence of Student Learning

Method	Description	Timeline	Responsibility	Objectives
Class presentation (CP)	Evaluation of required, research-related presentations in advanced specialty courses and/or seminars	Each semester	Graduate coordinator	1, 2, 3, 6
Internship supervisor reports (ISR)	Evaluation of student skills, knowledge, and performance in a required, external internship	Annual, at end of academic year	Assessment Committee	1, 4, 5
Teaching evaluations (TE)	Review of course syllabus, lessons, & assessments; student evaluations; and classroom visit	Fall and spring semesters	Chair	1, 6, 8
Qualifying exam (QE)	Evaluation of qualifying examinations by a committee external to the candidate's examination committee.	Annual	Assessment Committee	1, 2, 3, 5
Dissertation research proposal (DRP)	Evaluation of dissertation research proposal with regard to formulation of a research question, synthesis of literature, and proposed methodology	Annual	Assessment Committee	1, 2, 3, 4
Scholarship presentation (SP)	Evaluation of research presentations for delivery at professional meetings; practice in dept., or at meeting	Annual	Graduate coordinator	1, 2, 6
External review of scholarship (ERS)	Peer reviewer comments, outlet quality, and success rate of papers and proposals.	Annual	Graduate coordinator	2, 4, 5, 7
External recognition (ER)	Academic grants or fellowships, invitations to participate in research, activities in professional organizations, dissertation, teaching, or paper awards	Annual, at end of academic year	Graduate coordinator	1, 4, 5, 7, 8

### b. Indirect Evidence of Student Learning

Method	Description	Timeline	Responsibility	Objectives
Course evaluations (CE)	Student evaluations of course and teaching effectiveness	Annual, at end of academic year	Chair	8
Employment placement (EP)	Record of employment placement; time on market; salary competitiveness	Annual	Graduate coordinator	1, 4, 5, 6
Exit surveys (ES)	Survey of students assessing knowledge & skills growth; professional mentorship and program quality/satisfaction	Annual, at end of academic year	Assessment Committee	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Alumni supplemental surveys (ASS)	Survey of alumni at 1-, 3- and 5-years out with regard to knowledge and skills developed in Ph.D. program	Annual	Chair	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Alumni advisory panel (AAP)	Survey alumni and employers on skills and/or knowledge critical to career fields	Annual	Chair	1, 4, 5, 6
Student's internship reports (SIR)	Review of students' internship reports for information on skills and/or knowledge critical to internship duties	Annual, at end of academic year	Assessment Committee	5, 6, 7, 8



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c. Outcomes by Methods (**bold are direct methods**, *italics are indirect methods*)

	<b>CP</b>	<b>ISR</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>QE</b>	<b>DRP</b>	<b>SP</b>	<b>ERS</b>	<b>ER</b>	<i>CE</i>	<i>EP</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>ASS</i>	<i>AAP</i>	<i>SIR</i>
1. mastery of scholarship	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	
2. critical use of literature	X			X	X	X	X							
3. ideas attribution	X			X	X									
4. conduct Research		X			X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
5. apply theory & methods		X		X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
6. oral/graphic communication	X		X			X				X	X	X	X	X
7. scholarly publication							X	X			X	X		X
8. pedagogy & teaching			X					X	X		X	X		X