

New Geosciences Grad Student Orientation Fall 2019

Welcome!

There are many things to do and learn as you start your new graduate career here at UMass and keeping everything straight can seem overwhelming. This guide can help you get started. We've put together some information you'll need as a member of this department, as well as some pointers on entering life as a graduate student at UMass. So, relax, take a deep breath, and ask us lots of questions!

- Geosciences / MS Geography / MS Geography – GIST Graduate Program Directors

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1. Who is in charge?

The organizational chart shows the following structure:

- Department Head:** Stephen Burns (photo)
- Associate Department Head:** Steve Petsch (photo)
- Geography Program Co-Heads:** Eve Vogel (photo) and Forrest Bowlick (photo)
- GIST GPD:** MS Geography - GIST (Forrest Bowlick, photo)
- Geography GPD:** MS Geography (Qian Yu, photo) and MS Geography (Eve Vogel, photo)
- Geosciences GPD:** Geosciences MS and PhD (includes PhD Geographers and 1 yr hydro) (Michele Cooke, photo) and 1-yr hydro advisor (Dave Boutt, photo)

2. OIT, your NetID and your UMass email

www.oit.umass.edu/accounts

Each student is assigned an [Office of Information Technology](#) (OIT) account and NetID. This was sent to the email address you listed with your application. You need this NetID and password to access SPIRE, UMass wifi, UMass Box file storage, access library resources, [UMass Google Drive](#), which includes your UMass email and apps, etc.

Your [UMass email](#) (netid@umass.edu) is your official account during your graduate career and you should check this regularly or have the email forwarded to another account that you regularly check. GMail, MacMail and Outlook etc. all allow you to have multiple identities that facilitate handling multiple emails from one account.

3. Spire

www.spire.umass.edu

SPIRE is the web-based student information system. You use SPIRE to locate and register for courses, to review your course history and unofficial transcript, and to manage University finances, bills and fees. Use your NetID and password to log in to SPIRE.

Note: The first 10 business days of the semester are an “Add/Drop” period. You do not need to settle on your semester course schedule and registration until the end of the Add/Drop period. This allows you to change, add and/or drop classes, to set up independent studies or thesis/dissertation/research credits, or go on continuous registration (also known as program fee) once your course/credit requirements are completed.

4. UCard

www.umass.edu/ucard

UCard is the official UMass photo-identification card. You need this for access to certain buildings, offices, and services on campus. Visit the UCard web page for instructions how to get your grad student UCard.

5. Parking

<https://www.umass.edu/transportation/parking>

The UMass parking office issues permits for parking on campus. Lots that are available to graduate students are typically the Yellow and Green Lots. Visit the UMass Parking website to apply for a parking permit.

6. Public Transit (PVTA)

www.pvta.com

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) operates buses and shuttle vans in Amherst and surrounding towns of the Pioneer Valley. This is an excellent way to get around and to/from campus. Most buses around campus and the Five Colleges are free; the B43 to Northampton and other longer-range buses are free for UMass students during the school year with a UCard ID.

7. Campus WiFi

www.oit.umass.edu/wireless

UMass uses EduRoam, a world-wide roaming access service, to provide wireless coverage across the entire campus. To access campus WiFi, you need to run the XpressConnect setup wizard on your computer, tablet and smartphone. Enter your NetID and password; follow the instructions

on the OIT wireless web page. If you have trouble, the [UMass OIT User Services](#) office is very helpful! A109 Lederle, 545-9400.

8. UMass BOX and Apps at UMass

UMass has two cloud-based file storage platforms available to graduate students. The first is [UMass BOX](#), which is a secure storage platform. Sensitive information, such as student grades, must be stored on BOX and not on any other cloud-based platform (not dropbox, not google drive etc). UMass BOX has file sharing, syncing with your desktop etc. TBH: It is a little clunky but the secure nature of this file system and unlimited storage are quite nice.

The other cloud-based file storage is Google drive, which is associated with your UMass email and part of [Apps at UMass](#). You have unlimited free storage on your UMass google drive. You also have access to the full range of google apps, which are ad free and free of Google's user activity tracking. Caveat! If you already have a google account, you will need to pay attention to what identity you have when you log in. Some shared files may be accessible to your UMass identity but not your other Gmail identity. That avatar icon in the upper right corner that indicates your current identity (see image at right) will become very useful to you! I (Michele) recommend using photos instead of the generic letter, like the one I'm currently using (see boring 'M' in pic), to ease distinguishing your Gmail identities.



9. Laboratory Safety Training

www.ehs.umass.edu/trainings

Anyone working in an identified laboratory space or with any hazardous materials in the field must first complete an in-person Lab and Fire Safety Training session. These two different trainings. Visit the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Trainings website soon to register for an upcoming training session.



Each year, you must renew this safety training on-line through the EH&S OWL trainings on Lab Safety, Hazardous Waste Management, and Right-to-Know law.

Visit the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) OWL online training website to login and register for these online training seminars.

Jeff Salacup (in photo) is our EH&S coordinator. He reminds and advises us on staying compliant with EH&S regulations.

10. Geosciences Grad Program web page Geography Grad Program

www.geo.umass.edu/programs/graduate

<https://blogs.umass.edu/umgeog/graduate-program/>

The Geosciences program and Geography program maintain graduate web pages that provide descriptions of their respective graduate programs. These pages provide public-facing information about the programs, their policies, graduate student manuals with forms that mark degree progress and how to apply.

Also, on the Geosciences graduate program web page is a governance document describing our department's procedures for appointment and reappointment of assistantships in the MS and PhD programs (in other words, TAs and RAs).

11. Moodle page for Geosciences grad students

[Moodle](#) is a learning management system adopted by UMass. All graduate students are 'enrolled' in the Geosciences Graduate Student Moodle page. When you log into UMass Moodle, this page will be listed on the left side of your homepage. The Geosciences moodle page is chock full of useful information. The latest versions of graduate student manual can be found here as well as links to useful resources about grants, academic culture, teaching and even getting a job. The graduate program directors also use this page to notify students of deadlines and collect information from students.

The graduate student manual is available on websites as well as the Geosciences moodle page. The moodle page version will always be up to date (version posted on the web may not be). These manuals are your best guide and resource for the timeline, steps and requirements for your graduate degree. The manuals also include a number of departmental forms that must be completed, signed and returned to the graduate program director as you complete various degree requirements.

Please pay attention to deadlines and timelines in this manual; satisfactory progress towards your degree depends in part on completing these requirements in a timely fashion.



Welcome to the Geosciences graduate student Moodle page of resources to help you thrive during your graduate students in Geosciences at UMass.

Announcements

▼ Open all ► Close all

► Handbooks, Procedures, Guidebooks etc

► Fellowships

► Grants

► Culture of Academia

► Teaching resources

► Science Communication

► Some ways to make broader impacts

► Getting a job

► Tools

12. MS and PhD Geosciences student progress reports

MS and PhD students in the Geosciences program have individual UMass BOX folders shared with the Geosciences graduate program director. The Geosciences GPD updates your folders on the first of each month with official notices/memos, such as your welcome letter, and a text file that records the forms that you've turned in and your progress towards your degree.

13. The Graduate School website

www.umass.edu/gradschool

The UMass Graduate School website provides important detailed information about policies, forms and other information. In particular, the page "[Forms for Graduate Students](#)" lists forms you might need to complete and have signed as you achieve various benchmarks towards your degree. Additionally, the graduate school offers excellent workshops through their [Office of Professional Development](#) that can help you get the most from graduate school.

14. Geosciences Department Vans and OWL Motor Vehicle Idling Policy

To be authorized to drive a UMass-operated vehicle (e.g. the department vans), you must be a university employee and complete the online Motor Vehicle Idling Policy training. Visit the [Environmental Health and Safety](#) (EH&S) [OWL online training website](#) to login and complete training. If you are TA you will likely be asked to drive a van for that course.

Van use is restricted to course-related activities, and if available and with dept. head permission, research activities and travel to conferences. If you anticipate driving a department van, contact John Sweeney (Departmental Technician, room 128 Morrill) to get instructions on van use and driving tips. These vans loaded with 12 people handle quite differently than a small sedan.

All van use must be reserved in advance with staff in the Geosciences office. All van use must be logged, with miles recorded at the start and end of each use. Vans must be cleaned of interior trash and debris after each use. Vans must be returned to Geosciences parking with Full gas tanks. Failure to return the vans in clean condition and with full gas tanks may result in restrictions on future van use and TA positions.

15. Ecogite: our department server

The Geosciences Department server houses shared file systems for some research groups, mail listserves, the department web page and email accounts. Talk to your advisor/PI to find out if you will need an account on ecogite. For example, you may need an account to access research data stored on the server or to access research group servers from off campus. You may request a geo email account by completing the [Request form for a Geoscience Computer Account](#). The Geosciences Department shares IT staff with the Biology Department. See [this link](#) for services offered by our hard working IT staff, George Drake, Tom Carpenter and Chis Hoogendyke.

Your netid@umass.edu email has been added to the department database and you will receive all official departmental email at this address. You are expected to regularly check this account. If you also have an ecogite account (netid@geo.umass.edu), you should forward mail from one to other. You are expected to regularly check this account.

We have several automatic mailing lists within our @geo.umass.edu system. Each of these deliver to all @geo.umass.edu addresses in the relevant group. A more complete listing of groups can be found on the Geosciences moodle page,

- geoall@geo.umass.edu – goes to everyone with an @geo.umass.edu account, including faculty, staff, postdocs, graduate students and undergrads. This is a good list for making department-wide announcements.
- faculty@geo.umass.edu – all geosciences faculty members
 - o geolfac@geo.umass.edu – geology faculty in the department
 - o geogfac@geo.umass.edu - geography faculty in the department
- grads@geo.umass.edu - graduate students in the department
 - o geoggrads@geo.umass.edu - geography graduate students
 - o geolgrads@geo.umass.edu – geology graduate students
- majors@geo.umass.edu - all undergraduate majors
- ggmajors@geo.umass.edu – geography majors

Do not attach large files to emails to any of these mailing lists, as this sends copies of your attachment to each recipient's inbox and uses a lot of server space.

16. Accounts on DML and GIS lab computers

All graduate students and anyone enrolled in a geol, geog or geo-sci course has access to the computers in the DML and GIS labs. Although you already have an account, you will set a

password before you can log onto that account. Just follow [this link](#) to set up your password (this password doesn't link with your netid password and you don't need to change it every 12 months).

17. Keys for Geo offices and labs

Today you will be given a key for most grad student offices and department classrooms known as the "Grad Key". You may also need a key to your particular office and any labs that you are authorized to work in. You can request keys by submitting a completed Key Request Form to the Geosciences Business Manager in room 233 Morrill. It may take several weeks for UMass Physical Plant to complete your request and cut your new keys; the business manager will contact you when your keys are ready with instructions how to get them.

18. Printing and photocopies

Most printers in the department are associated with faculty offices and research labs. There is one printer in 254 called graphite that is for general departmental use. Currently, to use this printer, you need to have a geo.umass.edu account on our server (eclogite) and set up your computer to access the network printer. Because of the hassles of printing to graphite, many students print files on one of the photocopiers (see clever trick below).



There are two photocopiers available for use in the department. One is in room 254, and the other is in the Geosciences Department Office (233 Morrill). To use these photocopiers, you will need to enter a 4-digit authorization code. While individual graduate students are not typically given a code, faculty and courses are. So, if you are photocopying something associated with research with a faculty member, obtain her/his photocopier code. And if you are photocopying something associated with teaching responsibilities, ask the course instructor for a code. If you are stuck, the front office staff can help you. Note that the same codes work on both photocopiers. Also note we are responsible for simple maintenance on these machines. If your copying job depletes the paper reserve, fill the tray for the next person. Likewise, if you see a "low-toner" message, promptly tell one of the front office staff so that a new toner cartridge is put in.

One clever trick for printing out PDF files is to take a USB thumb drive with the file to one of the printers. After you plug in the USB drive and entering your 4-digit code, you can print file directly from the USB.

19. Geosciences Office Staff

We have four full-time staff positions in the Geosciences Department Office in room 233 Morrill. Each has their own specific responsibilities, but any of them can tell you the right person to ask with your question or concern. These staff are great resources that really make the whole department run as smoothly as possible. Get to know them well. They are there to help us, but remember, your lack of planning does not make an emergency on their part!

Staff include (with some of their responsibilities that impact graduate students):

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| <p>Unfilled Business manager (<i>course and room scheduling, TA & RA appointments</i>)</p> | <p>Eugenie Micelotta Department head assistant (<i>TA & RA appointments</i>)</p> | <p>Chris Stanavage Accountant (<i>purchases, visitor parking</i>)</p> | <p>Unfilled Office assistant (<i>travel authorization & reimbursement, office supplies</i>)</p> |
| |  |  | |

Receptionists: graduate students who work part time in the front office can help with vans, photocopiers, timesheets, mail etc.

20. Geo Graduate Student mailboxes

You have a mailbox slot in the Grad Student mail center in room 254. Department and university announcements will make up much of your mail. You will receive internal (university-related mail) if you supply the following address:

Your Name
Department of Geosciences
233 Morrill Science Center

To receive outside mail at your Geosciences mail box, use the following mailing address:

Your Name
Department of Geosciences
233 Morrill Science Center
University of Massachusetts Amherst
627 N. Pleasant St.
Amherst, MA 01003-9297

21. Professional Seminar (ProSem) and the Graduate Lecture Series (GLS) *optional for geographers*

Fridays in the Dept of Geosciences are days of talks and seminars! At 12:20-1:10 each Friday, we hold our Professional Seminar, informally called ProSem. This is our internal seminar series. It is an opportunity for members of our department community (grad students, post-docs, sometimes faculty, friends or undergraduates) to give a talk about their research. Giving a presentation at ProSem is a great way to practice a talk for an upcoming meeting, or just to try out some new ideas or interpretation of new data. There is no set format, but the presentations are typically expected to be research/scholarly talks. The exceptions are the first ProSem of each month when we have programmatic topics. ProSem is also a time when announcements of

upcoming events and activities are made to the entire department.

ProSem is required for Geosciences graduate students and encouraged for geographers. There are three requirements for MS and PhD Geosciences graduate students regarding ProSem. One is that for each semester you are enrolled in classes, you are required to enroll in Geosci701, the one-credit Professional Seminar course; registering for ProSem is one way you will earn credits at the 600-800 level. Second, if you are registered for ProSem you are expected to attend each week. The Geosci 701 course is graded pass/fail, and failure to regularly attend ProSem may result in a failing grade for the semester; if you know you are going to miss a week's ProSem due to another obligation, please let the graduate program director know in advance. Third, you are expected to deliver a ProSem presentation as a degree requirement in both the MS and PhD programs, unless you provide the graduate program director notice that you have delivered a talk at an off-campus meeting or conference. Even if you do give a talk at a meeting, it is still great to give a ProSem and let the rest of the department know about the research you are doing.

This year, the third Friday of each month is Geography Friday in ProSem, when ProSem will be on a Geography topic. Geographers are especially encouraged to attend these Fridays. There will be some exceptions; this fall, we skip October as the regional geography conference happens on the third Friday. Fall Geography Fridays are Sept 20 and Nov 15.

Friday afternoon is our Graduate Lecture Series (GLS), our lecture series with invited speakers from outside UMass. Although not held every week, these are the department-wide lectures where researchers/scholars from other institutions are invited to present their work. This is a graduate student-led seminar series; graduate students handle the invitations, travel, and announcements for the seminars. The GLS is a great way to hear about other people's research and to show a bit of our departmental face to the rest of the world. All Geosciences MS and PhD graduate students are expected to attend each GLS. Geographers are encouraged to attend. Geography faculty will often send special notification when speakers are geographers or are giving a talk particularly relevant to geographers. As possible, MS Geography students should leave this time open during their weekly schedule so they may attend relevant lectures.

22. Licenses for ArcGIS Software

<https://www.geo.umass.edu/arcgis>

All students, faculty, and staff have access to ArcGIS through our campus license agreement. You can request a license [here](#) to submit your information and be provided license and software download links.

23. Informal Geosciences Graduate Student Manual

[This google document](#) (link is live on pdf version available on moodle) written by and for graduate students provides lots of tips on settling into the Happy Valley and the Geosciences department. It is a live document updated with input from all Geo graduate students.