GEOSCIENCE, M.S.

The Department of Geoscience provides opportunity for advanced study leading to the master of science and the doctor of philosophy degrees. Broad research interests and numerous fields of specialization among the members of the faculty provide research opportunities in all major fields of earth science including geochemistry, geophysics, hydrogeology, microbial geoscience, mineralogy, nano-geoscience, paleontology, petrology, quaternary geology, sedimentology, structural geology, and tectonics.

The graduate student is expected to acquire a broad foundation in geoscience and in the supporting sciences before specializing. Courses are selected by the student in consultation with a three-member guidance and evaluation committee. Individual research and scholarship is required in all graduate work. It is expected that the candidate for an advanced degree will make original contributions, develop new ideas, and complete a dissertation suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, book, or report. Students may also obtain a joint master's degree in geoscience and water resources management if approved by both programs and the Graduate School.

The department maintains a variety of cutting-edge laboratories in Lewis G. Weeks Hall for the Geological Sciences. Strong connections also exist between the geoscience and geological engineering programs. Library and research facilities are available for advanced work in all important branches of the science. Geological survey offices in the Madison area, both state and federal, provide opportunities for cooperation with Survey geologists and the use of Survey facilities.

The program prepares students for teaching and research in academic positions, research work in state and federal organizations, and research and development in industry. The department coordinates interviews with potential employers several times during the year and maintains information on career placement. Students are actively involved in teaching and research programs and other scholarly activities of the department.

FUNDING

Financial assistance sufficient to meet the ordinary expenses of graduate school is available to qualified students in the form of fellowships and teaching or research assistantships. Prospective students should contact the department for information on available financial aid. All applicants must take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

MASTER'S DEGREES

M.S.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

30 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

16 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

Half of degree coursework (26 credits out of 51 total credits) must be completed in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university's Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 15 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

7 credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

Contact the program for information on any additional required courses.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.00

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

PROBATION POLICY

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.
ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS
Contact the program for information on required assessments and examinations.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

ADMISSIONS
Graduate students may enter the degree program with a bachelor’s degree in geology or a related earth science, or some other field relevant to the intended field of specialization. In addition to meeting the minimum admission requirements of the Graduate School, candidates must have had one year each of college chemistry, physics, and calculus. Graduate students in paleobiology are allowed to substitute statistics courses for the calculus requirement. A student entering the program with an undergraduate degree in geology is expected to have completed a 6–8 credit course in geologic field mapping.

Applicants will not normally be admitted with deficiencies in more than two one-semester courses in the required cognate subjects (for example, a prospective student could be missing one semester of physics and one semester of calculus). Such deficiencies should be removed within the first year of graduate study. A deficiency in field geology normally must be removed before commencing graduate study. Promising students with excessive deficiencies may be advised to take courses as a Special student before becoming eligible to enter graduate studies. They cannot, however, receive financial aid while a Special student.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
• Articulates, critiques, or elaborates the scientific theories, scientific hypotheses, research methods, and approaches to inquiry or schools of practice in geoscience.
• Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in geoscience.
• Demonstrates understanding of geoscience in historical, social, or global context.
• Selects and/or utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.
• Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in geoscience.
• Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to the geological sciences.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
• Recognizes and applies principles of ethical and professional conduct.

PEOPLE
Faculty: Professors Bahr, Brown, Carroll, DeMets, Feigl, Goodwin, Johnson, Kelly, Roden, Singer, Thurber, Tikoff, Tobin, Valley, Wang; Associate Professors Meyers, Peters, Xu; Assistant Professors Cardiff, Marcott, Zoet