



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LONG BEACH

**GRADUATE HANDBOOK:
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN GEOGRAPHY
College of Liberal Arts, CSULB**

Education in Geography at the graduate level provides an opportunity to broaden one's intellectual life and to acquire or upgrade knowledge and skills for many careers including teaching, planning, and research. The master's degree is also a prerequisite to entering a doctoral program.

The Master of Arts degree program in Geography at CSULB consists of a minimum 30 units of coursework, including graduate-level seminars and the preparation of an individual thesis study supervised by a faculty committee. The program calls for a greater degree of interest and a greater capacity for independent work than is expected of undergraduate students. In general, students who have completed a specified pattern of undergraduate courses with high grades are deemed eligible for admission to the master's degree program in Geography at CSULB. All applicants are reviewed in terms of their probable ability to complete the program and the alignment of their interests with faculty expertise.

This Handbook describes basic requirements and procedures for completion of the Master of Arts Degree program in Geography. University-wide policies and graduate degree information are described in the University Catalog (<http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/>) and the Graduate Studies web page (<https://www.csulb.edu/navigating-grad-studies-at-the-beach>). Students are expected to consult these resources and to bear responsibility for meeting all requirements and deadlines. The Graduate Advisor of the Geography Department is the primary academic counselor for graduate students. Please consult the advisor for help with any concerns you may have about your progress in the program.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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SECTION ONE: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GEOGRAPHY MASTER OF ARTS

I. Prerequisite Qualifications for Admission to the Geography MA Program

1. One of the following:
 - a. A bachelor's degree in Geography;
 - b. A bachelor's degree in a related discipline with 24 units of upper-division courses in a combination of Geography and/or approved courses in related disciplines.
2. Completion of Geography 200 or an introductory statistics class that is substantially equivalent.
3. An undergraduate upper-division grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better in Geography or a related discipline, or alternate evidence of ability to do graduate work in Geography.
4. Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores for the general test: these are optional, but may be recommended if the student feels they will strengthen the application.
5. Any further prerequisites as determined in advance by the Geography Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the Department Graduate Committee, who may then require completion of further coursework and/or other work.

NOTE: A student may be accepted into the Masters' program on a "conditional" basis, subject to the requirement that any prerequisites must be completed through additional preparation. If prerequisites are not completed at CSULB, the student shall submit transcripts from the institution(s) where prerequisites have been satisfactorily completed. When all prerequisites have been completed, the Graduate Advisor will change the student's status from "Conditional" to "Classified Standing."

II. Student Learning Outcomes for the MA Degree Program in Geography

Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are specific types of knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire in the program and to be able to demonstrate upon completion of the program. The Department expects that graduate students in geography will be skilled in disciplinary theories, methodologies, and topical content. These expectations ground the following learning goals and objectives for graduate students:

PLO 1: Compare and contrast the theories, philosophies, and concepts in the discipline of geography, including unifying themes of spatial patterns and structures, the interrelationship between people and places, and the interactions between nature and society.

PLO 2: Demonstrate an advanced understanding of and ability to differentiate among the various methodologies used in geographic research.

PLO 3: Acquire, analyze, evaluate, interpret and critique geographic data and/or research.

PLO 4: Communicate mastery of geographic data, theories, philosophies, and concepts in oral, written, and visual forms, with ethical engagement and respect for diversity of individuals, groups, and cultures.

PLO 5: Identify and assess how geographic concepts apply in the workplace and in everyday life to solve real-world problems.

III. Basic Requirements for the MA Degree in Geography

1. Completion of prerequisites, if any (see above).
2. Achievement of “Classified” Graduate Standing (see above).
3. Successful completion of the University Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). Graduate students who have previously (1) received a degree from an accredited college or university in the United States; or (2) received a degree from an accredited non-US institution located in a country where English is a primary language of communication; or (3) received a score of 4 or higher on the analytical writing portion of the GRE are exempt from the GWAR. For further information, please see: <http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/gwar/students/>
4. Completion of at least **30 units** of approved graduate courses, which must include:
 - a. A minimum of 24 units of geography courses;
 - b. A minimum of 21 units of 500 and 600 level courses, which must include:
 - i. Geography 596 Geographic Thought and Literature with a grade of “B” or better;
 - ii. A geographic methods course (several options; consult Graduate Advisor);
 - iii. Geography 696 Geographical Research Design with a grade of “B” or better;
 - iv. Two topical seminars: 600 (Seminar in Geography), 640 (Seminar in Physical & Environmental Geography), 650 (Seminar in Cultural Geography), 666 (Seminar in Urban Geography), or 680 (Seminar in Geospatial Science). Since the instructor and seminar topic changes with each offering, the same seminar can be taken twice to fulfill this requirement. One of these seminars should be taken during the first year of the program.
 - v. 6 units of Geography 698 thesis (normally taken over two semesters).
 - c. Additional 400-500-600 level elective courses as needed to reach at least 30 units.
5. Maintenance of a 3.0 grade point average at all times. A minimum grade of C is required for a course to count in the program.
6. Maintenance of continuous residency status at CSULB from the semester of admission until graduation by enrolling in at least one unit of course work every fall and spring semester unless an authorized educational leave of absence has been approved. Once all coursework has been completed, including thesis units, students may register for Graduate Studies (GS) 700B to maintain active enrollment status, if no other courses are being taken. (See Section Three for further information)

Students must be registered in at least one unit of course work or GS 700B during the semester in which the MA degree is awarded, including the winter or summer session.

7. The Department expects students to complete within four years of start date. After four years, the Graduate Advisor will require a progress report from students and Thesis Advisor approval before the Department will support ongoing enrollment. All requirements of the MA program must be completed within seven years of the date the student's MA program was initiated.
8. Consult the Geography Master's Degree program planner, available on the BeachBoard Graduate Student page and in the Department Office, for a list of courses meeting program requirements. Course descriptions may be found in the University Catalog.
9. Upon prior approval of the Thesis Advisor and Graduate Advisor, students may take a maximum of six units of coursework outside of Geography that is related to the student's thesis research.

IV. Graduate Transfer Units

At least 70% of the required units must be taken while in matriculated status as a graduate student, or with prior approval as a certificate student or senior. Up to 9 units of **approved** continuing education or transfer credit may be accepted if taken at CSULB. See:

<http://catalog.csulb.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=32#university-regulations-governing-the-master-s-degree>

V. Graduate Student Resources

Navigating a University the size of CSULB is sometimes challenging. In addition to the links embedded throughout this document, here are some sources that provide information and/or resources for graduate students:

The **MENU** option on CSULB's home page has links to various administrative departments, forms, class schedules, and other helpful information: <https://www.csulb.edu/>

Guidance for new graduate students: <https://www.csulb.edu/admissions/steps-for-newly-admitted-graduate-students>

Graduate Studies Guidelines: the Graduate Studies web page covers requirements and resources for graduate students <https://www.csulb.edu/navigating-grad-studies-at-the-beach>

MyCSULB Student Center: Your student center is the central hub for enrollment, progress to degree, and other critical information. Here is a startup guide: <https://www.csulb.edu/enrollment-services/mycsulb-student-center>

Geography Department website: <http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/geography/>

BeachBoard: CSULB utilizes BeachBoard for departmental teaching and administrative resources. Classes in which students are enrolled will have a BeachBoard page that may include the course syllabus and instructional materials posted by the faculty, as well as a DropBox for turning in assignments. The arrangement and utilization of BeachBoard course pages varies by instructor – ask them for help if you can't find something. All graduate students are also part of the department's Graduate Student page, where a variety of announcements, forms and additional links are posted. Group emails (tagged "BeachBoard Notify") are sent by the Graduate Advisor for time-sensitive announcements. BeachBoard utilizes the email address provided to you by the University.

Forms: University forms for filing to graduate after the deadline, changing your graduation date, or requesting an educational leave <https://www.csulb.edu/enrollment-services-financial-aid/forms>

Graduate Studies Resource Center: writing support, formatting workshops, and other resources <http://www.csulb.edu/graduate-studies-resource-center>

Writer's Resource Lab: writing support for students <http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/english/wrl/>

Thesis Office: formatting and submission guidelines for MA Thesis <http://www.csulb.edu/university-library/thesis-and-dissertation-office>

SECTION TWO: GRADUATE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

I. Advising in the Graduate Program

Upon admission to the Geography Graduate MA Program, the student must consult with the Graduate Advisor about choice of coursework. A program of study will be prepared in consultation with the Graduate Advisor that identifies recommended courses for the first year of graduate study and beyond. Students must obtain approval from the Advisor for any proposed courses outside of Geography to be accepted toward the degree. Any transfer coursework or courses taken outside of Geography to satisfy program requirements also require approval of the Graduate Advisor. **NOTE:** This course of study can be revised at any time, subject to Advisor approval.

Until a student has formed a Thesis Committee, the Graduate Advisor will serve as the student's interim counselor. Incoming students will also be paired with a faculty mentor for their first semester. The purpose of the faculty mentor is to provide an additional point of contact for students to discuss research ideas, relevant literature, and other potential resources. Normally students should meet with their mentor three times during the semester and are responsible for initiating these appointments. Faculty mentors are for one semester only and there is no obligation for them to be your Thesis Advisor, although if it seems appropriate you may mutually decide for your mentor to serve as either your advisor or a thesis committee member.

II. Registration for Courses

Register for and complete courses as determined in consultation with Graduate Advisor. Geography 596 is required and should be completed at the first opportunity. It is offered fall semester only at this time. Students may take other seminars before completing, or concurrently with 596 with permission of the Graduate Advisor. Any courses taken for MA credit outside of Geography must be approved **in advance** by the Graduate Advisor and/or Thesis Advisor.

Enrollment in Geography 697 (Directed Studies) may be undertaken with the supervision of any willing faculty member. It requires a written agreement between the student and the faculty supervisor as to what work and deliverables are expected. Enrollment in 697 requires approval from the Thesis Advisor or Graduate Advisor. Enrollment in thesis units (Geog 698) and GS 700 also requires approval from the Thesis Advisor and/or Graduate Advisor. Geog 697, Geog 698, and GS 700 all require a permit to enroll, issued by the Graduate Advisor or the department office.

III. Selecting a Thesis Advisor and Forming a Thesis Committee

During a student's first year of graduate study, identified areas of interest within the field of Geography will be encouraged and course work selected accordingly. The choice of interest areas rests with students, but students should consult with the Graduate Advisor and other faculty: <http://www.csulb.edu/colleges/cla/departments/geography/faculty/>

As part of Geography 696 (spring semester), students shall prepare a thesis proposal, select a Thesis Advisor and form a Thesis Committee, comprised of the Thesis Advisor and two other full-time faculty, who will guide the student through the remainder of the graduate program, particularly with respect to writing the thesis. Ordinarily, the Thesis Committee consists of three regular full-time CSULB Geography faculty members. The Chair of the committee must be a tenure-line faculty member in Geography. Under certain circumstances, one committee member may be from another academic discipline, another university, a part-time instructor at CSULB or a professional with at least a Master's Degree and expertise associated with the thesis research. Students are expected to consult with the Graduate Advisor, their faculty mentor, and/or the Geography 696 instructor regarding selection of the most suitable person to chair the Thesis Committee and identification of other faculty members who may serve on the Committee. Students, however, are ultimately responsible for asking the prospective Thesis Advisor and other Committee members if they are willing to serve. Individual faculty members will specify their requirements for acceptance of a position on a graduate student's Thesis Committee.

Normally, the Thesis Advisor is versed in the special subject area of the proposed thesis and directs the thesis work. The Thesis Advisor should be the first committee member to be selected, and should be consulted regarding other committee members. The Thesis Advisor normally also serves as the Thesis Committee Chair, and often these titles are used interchangeably. If the Thesis Advisor is a full-time lecturer or outside member however, the Thesis Advisor serves as "Thesis Director" in concert with the Thesis Committee Chair.

Selection of a thesis subject area that is compatible with faculty subject specialties is also a student responsibility. When approaching a prospective Thesis Advisor and other prospective Committee members, students should be prepared to discuss their areas of geographic interest and prospective thesis topics. A standard faculty requirement is to ask the graduate student to provide a thesis proposal or prospectus to the prospective Thesis Advisor and Committee members. The proposal should include: identification of the intended thesis topic, a literature review of key theoretical issues in geography (and other disciplines) related to the topic, an introductory discussion of the purpose and possible geographic significance of the topic, a methodology, and the expected outcome of the study. Such proposals are produced and committee members identified during Geography 696, typically taken in the spring semester of the first year of study (assuming Geography 596 is successfully completed in the preceding fall).

Before agreeing to serve on a thesis committee, the prospective members will review the thesis topic and determine that they possess the requisite expertise to serve on such a committee, and sufficient resources and materials exist and are reasonably available to the student to support such a study. Thesis committee members will also review the research competence of the student before approving a thesis proposal. Approval of the thesis proposal reflects the Thesis Advisor's judgment that the student is sufficiently prepared to pursue thesis work. The committee must be formalized by completing the Master's Thesis Committee form (available on BeachBoard), which is signed by all committee members and the department chair or Graduate Advisor. Any changes to committee makeup also require approval.

IV. Advancement to Candidacy

Advancement to Candidacy is an indication that the student is ready to pursue their thesis research. Approval to Advance indicates a positive assessment of the student's promise to complete the thesis research, based on a student's record of courses and grades, and the quality of the thesis proposal. The process of Advancement consists of: 1) an oral presentation of the thesis proposal to the department (faculty and students), and 2) approval by the Thesis Committee, Graduate Advisor, and Department Chair of an "Advancement to Candidacy" form, showing courses taken and planned and other requirements approved by the Geography Graduate Advisor in consultation with the student and the Thesis Committee.

Advancement to Candidacy research presentations are undertaken as part of Geography 696 course requirements, towards the end of the spring semester. The Thesis Advisor must review and approve the thesis proposal before advancement can be permitted. At least one additional faculty member should be identified as a committee member as well. If a student is not ready to advance, either by their own choice or that of the Thesis Advisor, the 696 requirements will be satisfied in the form of a presentation of the in-progress proposal, with advancement to take place at the next opportunity, typically the following semester, upon approval of the proposal by the Thesis Advisor. Advancement to candidacy is strongly encouraged by the student's third semester in order to complete the thesis in a timely manner. Students also should have their full thesis committee in place by their third semester.

In order to encourage timely progress to degree, students who have not advanced to candidacy by the time they have completed 24 units of MA coursework may, at the discretion of the graduate committee, be placed on administrative probation. A student will be removed from probation provided they complete an approved proposal and advance to candidacy by the following semester. Also, advancement to candidacy must occur at least one semester before the semester in which the degree is to be awarded, and advancement must be completed before the first semester of enrollment in Geography 698 (Thesis). If a student is allowed to enroll in Geography 698 and does not successfully advance, the enrolled units of 698 will not be accumulated towards the completion of the thesis and the student may be placed on administrative probation.

Upon completion of the advancement presentation, the student, Thesis Committee members, the Department Chair, and the Graduate Advisor sign the advancement to candidacy form. The Advancement status is then entered into the student's record for approval by Enrollment Services; if approved, the student becomes a Candidate for the MA. Subsequent changes to the student's program plan may require submission of a revised program of study before the student will be cleared for graduation by Enrollment Services. It is the student's responsibility to check their Academic Requirements Report in MyCSULB Student Center to ensure that progress to degree for all programs (MA, certificates) is accurately reflected.

V. The Thesis and Geography 698

The Master's degree program in Geography includes the preparation of a thesis – a work normally having greater depth and originality than a seminar study, and one that is added to the University Library collection. Length of the thesis may vary considerably, depending upon subject and research methodology; however, the thesis will usually consist of 50-80 pages of double-spaced text, plus abstract, reference list and graphics. Faculty may encourage students to structure their thesis as a journal article, following a suitable journal style (e.g. Annals of the AAG). Typically, this results in a slightly shorter but more in-depth work, with the traditional “literature review” condensed in the introductory portion of the paper as theoretical context and background. Students interested in pursuing this option should discuss with their Thesis Advisor. Prior student theses are accessible here: <http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/geography/graduate/geography-theses>

While the role of the Thesis Committee is to support the student’s research and thesis preparation, it is **the student’s responsibility to initiate and maintain communication with their committee.** Students should develop (and follow) a timeline for their research and writing in consultation with their Thesis Advisor, and consult regularly with their Thesis Advisor and other committee members as needed. It is strongly recommended that the student meet with their full committee after Advancement to Candidacy to discuss the research plan – research questions, data gathering, analysis, and any limitations or concerns – as well as the anticipated timeline for completion and committee member roles. Students should also ascertain the committee members’ preferences for reviewing drafts, and expected turnaround time for providing comments back to the student. It is particularly important that the committee be kept apprised of student progress and when to expect drafts for review. Students must allow faculty adequate time for this process. This will help to avoid delays due to faculty members’ other commitments, so that the student can graduate when planned. Once the final draft is complete, it is recommended that the student schedule a meeting with their entire committee to present their results and conclusions, and address any questions before final approval. The timing of this meeting, that is whether it occurs before or after the committee has read the draft, is at the discretion of the Thesis Advisor.

The preparation of the thesis is typically accomplished during enrollment in Geography 698 (6 units). These 6 units may be taken all at once or allocated over 2 or more semesters. The goal of Geography 698 is to complete all thesis requirements including securing Thesis Committee signatures of approval and the approval of the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and the University Thesis Evaluator. Enrollment in Geography 698 requires Graduate Advisor and Thesis Advisor approval and an enrollment permit. Students must have a complete thesis proposal approved by their Thesis Advisor and be advanced to candidacy. Students should prepare a semester work schedule and timeline and must schedule at least one meeting with the Thesis Advisor each semester that they are enrolled in Geography 698 (this may be a virtual meeting). Students should also attend one thesis formatting workshop at the Graduate Studies Resource Center prior to submitting their thesis for approval.

The MA Degree will be awarded after clearance is issued by the Graduate Studies' Thesis Office and all other degree requirements are met. Prior to submission, the student must obtain signatures of all Committee members through DocuSign (see the library thesis webpage below for instructions) then submit the thesis to the Associate Dean for review, generally 10-14 days *prior to* the Thesis Office deadline. Once approved by the Associate Dean, the thesis is electronically submitted by the student to the University Thesis Evaluator, for final review and approval. For a calendar of thesis due dates, see <http://www.cla.csulb.edu/thesis-information/>.

Graduate students should familiarize themselves with the resources and guidance available through the Thesis Office, including the thesis submission schedule and fees, DocuSign instructions, and formatting requirements (<http://www.csulb.edu/university-library/thesis-and-dissertation-office>). **Please note**, for Geography theses, citation style should follow the style guide of the *Annals of American Geographers* and Chicago Manual of Style.

If a student does not complete thesis requirements during enrollment in Geography 698, they must continue to maintain enrollment in the program until the thesis is approved (see next section). The grade for Geography 698 enrollment will be reflected as "RP" (report in progress) until the thesis is approved and submitted to the Dean's office. The student's thesis committee will then award a grade for the thesis.

VI. Filing to Graduate

Graduation means that all degree requirements have been fulfilled, after which the degree is awarded. In order to graduate, a student must file a "Request to Graduate" in the semester *prior to* the semester in which graduation is expected to occur, and following Advancement to Candidacy. Students should be aware of university deadline requirements for filing to graduate, typically October 15 for spring or summer graduation and March 1 for fall or winter. Before these deadlines, the Request to Graduate is made online through MyCSULB. Advisor approval is not required, but students should consult with their Thesis Advisor to ensure that their thesis will be completed and approved in the selected term. Filing after these dates is acceptable but usually requires a late fee and requests must be filed in person at Enrollment Services in Brotman Hall. Further information and request to graduate forms are available online: http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/graduation/masters_degree.html

After a Request to Graduate has been filed, the Graduate Division Evaluator in the Office of Enrollment Services will review the graduate program in order to verify that all requirements for graduation have been fulfilled or are scheduled for completion. The Graduate Evaluator will contact the student and the Graduate Advisor with a Master's Degree/Certificate Check that identifies any requirements that remain to be fulfilled, or certifies that all requirements are met or will be met for graduation and award of the MA degree. If actual completed coursework differs from that listed on the approved Advancement to Candidacy form, a request for substitution may need to be entered into the student's record by the Graduate Advisor. Students should check their *Academic Requirements Report* in MyCSULB prior to filing to graduate, to ensure that all program requirements other than thesis are complete and that course credit is accurately reflected.

If the student is not ready to graduate during the semester for which they filed, the expected graduation date must be changed by filing a request to change the graduation date with Enrollment Services. This should be done as soon as possible, but no later than the term in which the student had originally planned to graduate. **Failure to do so may result in graduation being denied.**

Note that *graduation* and participation in the *graduation ceremony* differ. University Commencement Ceremonies are held once per year, after the spring semester. Participating in the Commencement Ceremony is not contingent upon fulfilling all degree requirements, rather it is open to any students who were eligible to graduate the prior fall, winter, or current spring term, or who expect to graduate the following summer or fall semester.

SECTION THREE: RESIDENCY, EDUCATIONAL LEAVE & GRADUATE STUDIES 700

I. Interruption of Continuous Residency Leading to Withdrawal from the University

Interruption of program residency occurs when a graduate student fails to enroll in the minimum number of units in any term. Students must be registered in a minimum of one unit, either in a course or in Graduate Studies (GS) 700, or on approved educational leave, for each spring and fall semester until the completion of their degree. Students who fail to stay continuously enrolled in one of these ways will be withdrawn from the graduate degree program by Enrollment Services. The student will be required to apply for reinstatement to the University if they wish to resume graduate study.

II. Educational Leave of Absence

Any registered student in good academic standing, who has completed at least one semester and earned units, may request an educational leave of absence. This must be approved by the Graduate Advisor and, if advanced to candidacy, the student's Thesis Advisor. The minimum initial leave will be one full semester; the maximum will be one calendar year. A student may request, in writing and in advance, an extension of the leave. For details, see:

<http://www.csulb.edu/student-records/educational-leave>

A student who requests an educational leave shall complete an Application for Educational Leave Form in the semester before the leave is effective, including an explanation of reasons for seeking the leave and indicate when the student intends to resume academic work by officially registering for classes, thesis units or GS 700. A student may also request an educational leave during the semester of the intended leave but will be subject to a late filing fee.

An educational leave presupposes no expenditure of University resources or faculty and staff time on behalf of the student during the period of the leave. In addition, no computer facilities, no library privileges and no student services are available to a student on educational leave. Failure to request and receive approval for an Educational Leave of Absence will require the student to reapply for admission to the university and graduate program at the time the student seeks to register for the purpose of continuing his/her graduate program of study. The period of an educational leave is counted in the calculation of elapsed time under the regulations governing the maximum time period for completion of MA degree requirements (seven years).

III. Graduate Studies 700

Registration in GS 700 is restricted to graduate students who have completed all other course work, including thesis units, have been advanced to candidacy, and have Graduate Advisor approval. Although no unit credit is added to the student's program or transcript, the course is considered as one unit of concurrent enrollment credit for fee payment purposes. This allows the student continued access to faculty and University facilities (with the exception of the Student Health & Wellness Center) in order to complete all remaining thesis requirements and be eligible for later graduation and

award of the degree. As with Geography 698, students should be in communication with their thesis advisor as to their plan of work and thesis progress via virtual or face to face meetings, particularly with respect to when drafts will be submitted. Students must be registered either in a course or in GS 700 for **every semester** (fall and spring) until the completion of their degree. Registration in GS 700 is also required in winter or summer session **IF** that is when a student plans to graduate.

The Graduate Advisor issues permits to enroll in GS 700, and students may enroll online using MyCSULB. Geography students should register in GS 700**B**. Students who wish to enroll in a third semester of GS 700 will be required to obtain the approval of their Thesis Advisor. This is accomplished by completing a GS 700 Plan of Work Report (available on BeachBoard) and obtaining necessary departmental approvals. Additional enrollments in GS 700 beyond four semesters will require demonstration of progress and a detailed plan of action for completion, and approval of the Associate Dean.

IV. Educational Leave versus GS 700

Students are eligible for a maximum of four semesters of educational leave and four semesters of GS 700 enrollment, if approved. In deciding which is the most appropriate action in any given term, students should consider the following:

- An educational leave is intended to provide time off from academic work to address such things as personal matters, illness or medical issues, family emergencies, or outside employment, among others. Students on educational leave do not have access to University resources, including faculty and library facilities, as it is assumed they are taking a break from their degree program activities. Program residency is maintained, but the student is considered inactive until they return to enrolled status.
- GS 700 maintains access to University resources. It is intended to maintain enrollment for students who have completed their coursework but need more time to complete their thesis. Continuing progress on the thesis is assumed, and regular contact with the Thesis Advisor is strongly recommended.

V. Readmission

Students who fail to maintain enrollment at CSULB each fall and spring semester, without filing an approved request for an educational leave of absence, or who fail to maintain a 3.0 GPA for more than two semesters, will be withdrawn from the graduate degree program by the University. If a student wishes to resume graduate study after having been withdrawn, the student should consult with the Graduate Advisor and/or Thesis Advisor regarding requirements. The student will need to apply for reinstatement to the University by applying for admission to the MA program in Geography and requesting that the Geography Department initiate a petition to the Vice Provost of Graduate Studies to reinstate the student. Reinstatement of Advancement to Candidacy status and requirements for additional coursework will be at the Department's discretion.

SECTION FOUR: SCHOLARSHIPS and AWARDS

The following awards and scholarships are generally available to graduate students. Specific application procedures and eligibility requirements will be distributed prior to submission deadlines. Other awards or scholarships may be available through University Financial Aid, Associated Students, or other programs. Announcements will be circulated as appropriate.

College of Liberal Arts Awards & Honors:

Dean's List of Graduating Master Students, University Scholars and Artists (top 1%)
Nominated by the Department, chosen by College of Liberal Arts, Spring

Best Thesis Award

Nominated by Department, chosen by College of Liberal Arts, Spring

Distinguished Master of Arts Graduates

Chosen by Department, Spring

University & College Research Funding:

The University offers competitive Graduate Research Fellowships of \$4,500 annually (must be nominated by department; application to CLA in spring).

Associated Students Inc. (ASI) offers up to \$1,000 to fund student research, as well as travel for conference attendance. For more information, see:

<http://www.cla.csulb.edu/academics/graduate-studies/> and <http://www.csulb.edu/office-of-research-and-sponsored-programs/student-research/student-funding-opportunities>

Departmental Awards/Scholarships:

Award amounts vary depending on performance of scholarship funds but typically range from \$750-\$1,000.

Rodney Steiner Scholarship

Eligibility: Undergraduate or graduate student continuing the following fall

Deadline for application: Early spring; one award given. Application is through BeachScholarships.

Franklin Gossette Scholarship

Eligibility: Graduate students who have advanced to candidacy and are continuing the following spring

Deadline for application: Fall; one award given. Application is through BeachScholarships.

Graduate Research Enhancement Fund

Provides funding for software, imagery, equipment, etc. to support student research.

Eligibility: Graduate students advanced to candidacy

Deadline: applications accepted at any time during the academic year, number of awards depends on available funding.

Travel Awards

Geography will pay registration fees or a travel stipend for students presenting a paper or poster at an academic conference, as department funds allow.

Geography Department Employment

The Department offers several opportunities for student employment, generally up to 10 hours per week. Positions include student technicians to support the GISci computer labs, Teaching Associates for lab sections of GEOG 130 Geography of Weather Climate, and Instructional Assistants for large lecture classes. As the number of positions is limited, positions are generally limited to one year. Qualified first year (incoming) graduate students have priority for placement; if not all positions are filled, continuing students may apply.

GEOGRAPHY MA Typical 2-Year Graduation Plan

Semester 1 (Fall)	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geography 596 2. Seminar/method/elective* 3. Seminar/method/elective* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geography 696 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proposal completion b. Advance to Candidacy c. IRB, if needed 2. Seminar/method/elective* 3. Seminar/method/elective* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geography 698 (3 units) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Compete fieldwork/data Collection b. First Draft of thesis to Thesis Advisor 2. Seminar/method/elective* 3. Seminar/method/elective (as needed)* 4. File to Graduate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geography 698 (3 units) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review draft with chair and committee b. Revisions c. Final draft to Advisor and committee, minimum of 6 weeks in advance of Dean's deadline d. Attain signatures of above and submit to Dean's office (typically 12-14 days in advance of Thesis office deadline) e. Submit final thesis <p style="text-align: center;">GRADUATION!</p>
<p>*Requirements: 2 topical seminars, 1 methods class, and minimum of 8 units of electives (2-3 classes)</p>			

Note that Geography 596 is only offered fall semester and is a prerequisite to Geography 696. Students beginning the program in spring semester will take Geography 596 in their second semester and Geography 696 in their third semester.