

## **UCD School of Geography**

### **Guidelines for Graduate Students – Taught Masters**

**MA Geography**  
**MA Geopolitics and the Global Economy**  
**MSc Critical Geographies**  
**MSc Geospatial Data Analysis**  
**MSc Risk, Resilience and Sustainability**



**Handbook 2022-2023**

## Introduction

Welcome to your Masters programme in the UCD School of Geography. We trust you will have an enjoyable and productive year pursuing your Masters, where we expect you will develop your appreciation of Geography, enhance your skill set, and pursue independent research in an area of personal interest. Emphasis is placed on active participation, cooperation with your colleagues, and developing significant independent judgement and work practices. The Director of Graduate Studies is Prof. Alun Jones ([alun.jones@ucd.ie](mailto:alun.jones@ucd.ie), ph.: 1 716 8683, H003 Newman Building). You may contact Alun with any questions, queries or concerns you may have in relation to the Masters programme.

The School of Geography is diverse in outlook, with academics from a range of backgrounds and subfields in human geography and physical geography, including geopolitics, urban geography, development geography, historical geography, critical and radical geographies, GIS, climatology, and geomorphology, among others. This diversity in geographical research and teaching provides an exciting environment for leading edge and collaborative research and studies.

There are five distinct Masters programmes available within the School: MA in Geography, MA Geopolitics and the Global Economy, MSc Critical Geographies, MSc Geospatial Data Analysis, and MSc Risk, Resilience and Sustainability. These programmes offer students the opportunity to specialize in a particular field of Geographical study.

The Master's programme is subject to general College of Social Sciences and Law Graduate School and University regulations governing Masters degrees.

## The MA/MSc Course Programme

The Masters are one year, full-time or two-year, part-time, postgraduate courses, and involve lectures, seminars, extensive reading, and supervised research activities. Students on these programmes will take compulsory modules in research design and geographical analytical techniques, as well as a fieldwork module relevant to their area of study. Some of the programmes then require students to select a certain number of credits worth of optional modules from a menu of available courses, including – in some cases – modules offered by other schools that further promote interdisciplinary study. Finally, students are required to complete a 30-credit dissertation.

### Course Structure

The Masters programmes in the School of Geography are 90 credit (ECTS) courses: 60 ECTS must be completed as coursework through compulsory and optional modules. The remaining 30 ECTS are assigned to the dissertation. You will see details of which modules are core and which are options when you are completing your registration in SIS web. Module descriptors can be found on the [UCD Course Search](#), Click "Search by School" and select Geography and tick the "level 4" tick box to find a complete list of GEOG modules. Modules from other schools are individually searchable. The first number in parentheses (1,2 or FY – full Year) after the module code indicates the semester the module is run in, the second (a multiple of 5) indicates the number of credits attached to the module.

### ***Dissertation (30 ECTS Credits)***

Students must submit a dissertation based on original geographic research. The subject of this dissertation must be approved by, and determined in consultation with, the School of Geography. The dissertation will normally be between 18,000 and 20,000 words in length, exclusive of bibliography and title page. Please note that the quality of the dissertation's content is more important than focusing on meeting the word count alone. Decisions on dissertation topics and Research Proposals should be finalised by

the completion of the Semester 1 Research Design module and will be presented to the School. You will be assigned a supervisor who may be consulted for general advice. The actual research and compilation of the dissertation is your responsibility, and you should drive the topic and engagement with it. The dissertation is 1/3 of your Masters credits and should occupy much of your time, particularly from the second semester onwards. However, the basic preliminary work will begin from September, particularly in the Research Design course.

The dissertation deadline for submissions is **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023**. Theses will be submitted on Brightspace, and you will also be required to submit a declaration confirming that this is your original work. Part of the discipline of undertaking a dissertation is learning to manage a project and to meet hard deadlines. **There will be no extensions to the dissertation deadline unless there are documented extenuating reasons and you have formally received approval from the dissertation coordinator.** The coordinator of dissertation submissions in August 2023 will be Prof Niamh Moore-Cherry ([Niamh.moore@ucd.ie](mailto:Niamh.moore@ucd.ie), Room H004).

#### *Dissertation supervision*

Members of staff and contact details are available on the school website. You should discuss your research proposal with a staff member who may be willing to be your supervisor. You will have a dissertation supervisor by the end of the Research Design course in Semester 1.

#### *Meeting your dissertation supervisor*

It is important that you see your supervisor on a regular basis if you are to benefit from the supervisor-student arrangement. The duration and regularity of such meetings will depend to some extent on the nature of your research and your academic progress. You should agree with your supervisor the frequency with which meetings should take place. It is also important that you prepare in advance for prearranged meetings and that you keep any appointments that have been made. You are also expected to meet all deadlines and to submit work on time. You should consult your supervisor about any difficulties, academic or personal, which may be affecting your studies at the earlier opportunity. We can provide better support locally within the School if we know about issues as they arise. Your supervisor's role is to advise, give help and encouragement. The dissertation is, however, your own work, and you must accept the responsibility for its eventual success or failure.

## **Supervision deadline**

As the summer term is designated as research term for our staff, and you are requested to conduct a significant part of your dissertation work independently, there is a deadline for requesting your supervisor's support, Dissertation supervision is provided from trimester one until **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023**. Any drafts or chapters that you wish to have reviewed by your supervisor should be submitted in advance of that date to allow feedback.

You should ensure that your project plan takes account of this deadline and be prepared to work independently during July and up to the August deadline.

## Your responsibilities

The school's full-time Master's Programmes are one-year programmes that require a very substantial time commitment. Full-time students should consider this commitment if they are undertaking any part-time work inside or outside the university. While contact hours may be relatively low, you will be expected to conduct significant amounts of independent work, both for core and optional modules and for your dissertation. In a postgraduate environment, such self-guided work programmes are the norm, and you will be expected to set and meet deadlines, complete significant written and other assessment, and make consistent progress in completing your dissertation research and writing. In addition, your responsibilities include:

- Complying with postgraduate and university regulations and any other College or School procedures.
- Discussing with your supervisor the type of guidance you find helpful.
- Agreeing a schedule of meetings with your supervisor(s) and attending arranged meetings; Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem; Attending training and any forms of instruction as required by your supervisor or the postgraduate coordinator,
- Attending and presenting at seminars as required by your School.
- Maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with your supervisor.
- Presenting written material as requested by your supervisor by agreed dates.
- Postgraduate students may be required to take part in School activities as an integral component of their responsibilities.

## Dealing with Difficulties

### Failing Taught Modules

From time-to-time students do fail (i.e., do not achieve at least a D- overall grade) in taught modules. This is not, in and of itself, a disaster. The opportunity to resit the assessment is generally offered in the following teaching semester. A resit is graded as Pass/Fail and is capped at a GPA of 2.0 for a pass. A student resitting a module would not be expected to attend classes again but would be required to complete an assessment. Please note that registering online for a resit IS A STUDENT'S OWN RESPONSIBILITY. If a student does not register for, or fails a resit, they will be required to repeat the module the next time that it is offered. This does involve attending all classes again etc., though the GPA remains capped at 2.0. Alternatively, a student failing an option (not core) module may substitute for an alternate module.

Please note that resits are NOT set in the summer research period. Students who fail a semester 2 module will be required to resit that module in the next teaching semester (i.e., Semester 1 of the following academic year). There are fees associated with resitting, repeating, or substituting a module, and these can be found on the [UCD Fees](#) website.

### Delays in your progress

If you run into difficulties which cause you to fall behind in your research, it is essential that you act as quickly as possible before too much time is lost. The first thing you should do is to speak to your supervisor, who may be able to suggest a solution. For example, if you are being hindered by difficulty in getting access to source material, it may be possible to make other arrangements to let you get on with your work. If your supervisor cannot help, he or she should advise you as to what you should do next, or you can approach the Director of Graduate Studies if necessary.

### **Difficulties with your supervisor**

Normally, all possible issues should be dealt by discussing them with your supervisor. In some exceptional cases, you might feel that there is substantial disagreement on the project to be conducted, or difficulties in communication that you feel unable to manage alone. In these cases, you should talk to the Director of Graduate Studies – currently Prof. Alun Jones ([alun.jones@ucd.ie](mailto:alun.jones@ucd.ie), ph.: 1 716 8683, H003 Newman Building) - who will endeavour to help.

## **Ethics in Research**

UCD maintains the highest standards of integrity in its research activity. Ethical standards are given paramount importance in the University's Research Policy and Strategy and imbue its research culture: "All research should be conducted within an ethical framework consistent with the traditional principles of academic freedom".

UCD's existing structures to promote and promulgate ethical research practice, emphasising integrity and rigour, seek to sustain a culture in which the following general principles are understood and observed; honesty; openness; leadership and cooperation; supervision and training; guidance from professional bodies; best practice in the ownership, recording and storage of primary data samples; best practice in publication. For further details, see the [UCD Research](#).

### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. You should realise that your dissertation must be your own work and all quotations from other sources, whether published or unpublished, must be properly acknowledged. Plagiarism is a serious offence and, when proven against a student, may result in disqualification from the examination for their degree and exclusion from all future examinations of the University. Some joint work is permitted, provided it is properly acknowledged as such. For further information regarding what constitutes plagiarism, see the UCD library's guide on [Academic Integrity](#), Details of the School's plagiarism policy are available from the School website.

## **Contacts**

There are a number of different sources of help and advice on various aspects of postgraduate study. Your first point of contact should normally be your supervisor, who should be able to answer many of your queries or to direct you to another source of help.

Nature of Query	Sources of Advice
Academic Queries	Your Supervisor The Director of Graduate Studies
Monitoring Progress	Your Supervisor The Director of Graduate Studies
Dissertation Submission	GEOG40520 Module Coordinator
Disability Supports	<a href="#">UCD Access and Lifelong Learning</a>
Enrolment and Registration	The School Office <a href="#">UCD Student Desk</a>
Equipment and Facilities	Your Lecturer Your Head of School
Examination Arrangements	Lecturers, Director of Graduate Studies, <a href="#">Assessment Unit</a> in UCD Registry
Financial Difficulties	Financial Information Services, contacted through your <a href="#">Student Adviser</a> and the <a href="#">Students' Union</a>
Graduation	<a href="#">UCD Conferring Unit</a>
Student Health	<a href="#">UCD Student Health Service</a>
Personal Difficulties	Your Lecturer or Head of School

	<p><a href="#">Registrar's Office</a></p> <p><a href="#">Student Advisers</a></p> <p><a href="#">University Chaplaincy</a></p> <p><a href="#">UCD Student Health Service</a></p> <p><a href="#">Students' Union</a></p> <p><a href="#">Niteline</a></p>
Tuition Fees	<a href="#">Fee and Grants Office</a>
International Students	<a href="#">UCD Global</a>

## General Information

### 1. Coordinator for Masters Programmes in the School of Geography

The coordinator for Masters programmes in the School of Geography is Prof. Alun Jones, and he is your first point of contact if you are experiencing any problems or difficulties with your studies.

*For any query related to the programme you are attending, Programme Coordinators are:*

MA Geopolitics and the Global Economy: Prof Alun Jones [alun.jones@ucd.ie](mailto:alun.jones@ucd.ie)

MSc Critical Geographies: Prof Kath Browne [kath.browne@ucd.ie](mailto:kath.browne@ucd.ie)

MA Geography: Assoc Prof Gerald Mills [gerald.mills@ucd.ie](mailto:gerald.mills@ucd.ie)

MSc Geospatial Data Analysis: Dr Tobi Morakinyo [tobi.morakinyo@ucd.ie](mailto:tobi.morakinyo@ucd.ie)

MSc Risk, Resilience and Sustainability: Prof Jacky Croke [jacky.croke@ucd.ie](mailto:jacky.croke@ucd.ie)

### 2. Staff-Student Committee

Each year, postgraduate students nominate representatives to become members of the staff-student committee. The Staff-Student Committee will meet regularly and is an appropriate place to raise general concerns.

### 3. Facilities

The School provides computer facilities in the E003 Laboratory for the use of postgraduate students when the room is not in use for teaching.

The Library has some workstations available for postgraduate students in its Humanities and Social Science Research Centre. For more details, visit the [Library Website](#)

### 4. Administrative Queries

Your first point of contact on all administrative matters should be the School's Senior Administrator, Kate Bruton, who is based in E001, in the Newman Building and can be contacted at [geography@ucd.ie](mailto:geography@ucd.ie), phone: +353 1 716 8179

## 5. Checklist

In preparation for your course, you should ensure that you:

- Register with the University and obtain a student card (which is also your library card)
- Get a UCD Computer Account from IT Services.
- Attend one of the *free* induction courses provided by [UCD IT Services](#). Visit their website for information on where and when these are being run.
- Become familiar with the resources in the Library through its [Guides by Subject](#).
- Apply for an ALCID card, which allows you to use the libraries of some other universities.
  - Details are available from the [Library](#).

## Appendix

### Dissertation Presentation Guidelines

The student will prepare a dissertation under the direction of a supervisor. The student must be a fully registered student and fees compliant at the time when the dissertation is submitted for examination. Your dissertation should be submitted through Brightspace (Module code GEOG40520) and the contact person for all queries related to this submission is Prof. Niamh Moore-Cherry (Niamh.moore@ucd.ie). Please ensure to read all of the guidelines on the dissertation submission and check the module FAQ's in Brightspace (Module tools > FAQ) before sending an email.

The following general guidelines apply, and these may be supplemented by School-specific guidelines:

### 2.1 Quality and Typographical Detail

#### 2.1.1 Layout

Margins at the binding edge shall be not less than 30mm and other margins not less than 20mm. One-and-a-half spacing shall be used, except for indented quotations and footnotes, where single spacing may be used.

#### 2.1.2 Font

The recommended font used shall be a sans serif font (including Arial, Helvetica, Tahoma, Times New Roman or Trebuchet) and shall not be less than 12pt. Footnotes shall not be less than 10pt.

#### 2.1.3 Length

Normally between 18,000 and 25,000 words, exclusive of bibliography and title page

#### 2.1.4 Page Numbering

Pages shall be numbered consecutively throughout the substantive text of the dissertation, including appendices. Prefacing pages shall also be numbered consecutively, but using the Roman numeral format (i., ii., iii., iv., v., etc.). Page numbers shall be right justified at the bottom of the page.

## 2.2 Preliminaries

### 2.2.1 Title Page

The title should describe the content of the dissertation accurately and concisely. The title page shall give the following information in the order listed (see Appendix 1):

- The full title of the dissertation and subtitle, if any.
- The full name of the author (followed, if desired, by any qualifications).
- That "The dissertation is submitted to University College Dublin in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of... ..".
- The School(s) in which the research was conducted.
- Name of the supervisor of the research.
- The month and year of submission.

### 2.2.2 Table of Contents

The table of contents shall immediately follow the title page. It should list the title of each chapter and the main sections in each chapter together with the relevant starting page numbers.

### 2.2.3 Abstract

There shall be a summary abstract of the dissertation (of approximately 300 words) immediately following the table of contents page(s).

### 2.2.4 Collaborations

Where the research activity for the dissertation was undertaken jointly with others, the name of such collaborators or co-authors must be listed immediately following the summary abstract page, including a short description of the nature of the contribution made by each author, including the student.

### 2.2.5 Submission

The final submission date will be **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

## Student Code of Conduct

The full student code is available at:

[http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/regs\\_sc.html](http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/regs_sc.html)

## Graduate Minor Dissertation Submission Form

The Graduate Minor Dissertation Submission Form can be found at:

[http://www.ucd.ie/students/assessment/dissertation\\_forms.html](http://www.ucd.ie/students/assessment/dissertation_forms.html)

## MSc/MA Postgraduate Programmes – Research Project Dissertation as a Scientific Publication

This year, Masters taught masters students in the School of Geography can **prepare Master dissertations in the form of a scientific article** that is to be submitted to a suitable peer-reviewed journal. This is an alternative to the traditional dissertation in the form of a monograph. However, **this format can only be adopted if the research proposal is of high standard and the student has achieved high grades in relevant modules. It will be decided in full agreement with the main research supervisor.**

The following conditions apply:

- The **supervisor must be fully supportive of the approach**. Students wishing to explore this option should consult with their main supervisors and follow his/her advice. The supervisor's decision is final and cannot be subject to appeal.
- **If there are any doubts** as to whether the research findings can be published (informed, among other things, by the objective and scope of the research, the anticipated findings and the overall student's performance during the academic year and his/her commitment to the research), a precautionary approach will be adopted, and the student will be requested to **submit the dissertation in the traditional format**.
- **If agreed** with the supervisor that **the research is publishable**, the student shall **agree on a suitable journal** with his/her supervisor in the early stages of the writing process.
- The **student must be the first author** of the article, drive its preparation and fully draft it. The main supervisor and any other contributor (e.g., co-supervisors, research/project partners) should provide feedback at key stages and contribute to the article as appropriate. These contributions will be duly acknowledged as co-authors.
- The scientific **article should be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal before or at the same time of the dissertation deadline**, when it will also be submitted as part of the dissertation programme for grading (with some additional content as described below).
- The supervisor and the students will **agree on a research plan** that contains internal deadlines for submitting the various sections of the article.
- The **format of the article shall follow the instructions given by the chosen journal**. It will normally conform to: introduction (succinct literature review and focused research question), research methodology (concise and brief, focused on methods/techniques applied rather than their justification), results (key data and main finding, and their interpretation), discussion (concise and supported by literature), conclusions (summary of findings and key recommendations), and references (reference list according to the journal's specific standards).
- **When an article is proposed for submission as a dissertation, a separate introductory part is to be included in the work**, in which the student describes the research approach, process and methodology and discusses the significance of the research results from a broader viewpoint than would be possible in the article. This is to follow the provided School template, which is based on the format of the research proposal, and it is complemented with additional sections to report on the results and discuss them.
- **Both the article manuscript and the introduction are examined and evaluated** as parts contributing to the master's dissertation.

## Parental Leave

Where possible, students should apply for a Leave of Absence during their parental leave. If this causes issues with funding, students can apply for a no fees extension for the period of parental leave but must be aware that there is no provision for payment of stipends during this additional time.

## Sick Leave

If a student feels unwell and needs to stay at home for a day or two, the supervisor(s) should be informed. If a student is unwell for a longer period, they should try to maintain regular email contact with their supervisor(s) to keep him/her informed of their health and they must provide a medical certificate for the period of illness. In cases where students may be requesting a 'no-fees extension' due to illness, relevant supporting documentation must be provided.

In some serious cases, it may be advisable for the student to apply for a [Leave of Absence](#).

## Borrowing a Dissertation

If permission is granted to you by the Course Coordinator to borrow and consult a dissertation, this must be done within the school. Permission will not be granted to remove a dissertation from the School, and it would be a breach in trust to do so.

## Plagiarism

UCD upholds the principle of academic integrity, whereby appropriate acknowledgement is given to the contributions of others in any work. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty, where ideas are presented falsely, either implicitly or explicitly, as being the original thought of the authors. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and while it may be easy to commit unintentionally, it is defined by the fact not the intention. All students are responsible for being familiar with the University's Plagiarism Policy.

Please refer to the [Plagiarism Policy](#)

## Extenuating Circumstances

Students are expected to meet the academic demands of their chosen programme. However, they may experience a range of serious and unanticipated difficulties, which adversely affect their ability to study, complete assessments or attend their required classes and other learning activities. The Policy on Extenuating Circumstances provides a framework through which Boards of Examiners may take these difficulties into account in a fair and equitable manner, establishing key principles and outlining the process to be followed.

Please refer to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#)

### *Forms and Supporting Documents*

- [Guidance Notes for Students](#)
- [Guidance Notes for Staff](#)
- [Download Application Form](#), or
- [Apply Online](#) (where available for your programme)

## Academic Regulations

Please refer to the [Academic Regulations policy](#)

## Ethical Approval for Dissertation Research

As an initial step, students and their supervisors should meet as early as possible to identify whether their study will require ethical approval. The University Code should inform this conversation of Good Practice in Research and information on the UCD Research Ethics website relating to when a Low Risk/Exemption is appropriate and when full ethical approval might be needed. Ethics submission is a two-stage process and must be completed on the most recent version of the appropriate ethics application form. Students must submit a completed ethics application with relevant supporting documentation to their supervisors before **5 pm on Friday, 17th Feb 2023**. Supervisors will review and assess these applications and send feedback to students for implementation. Revised and corrected applications must be returned to supervisors by **5 pm on Friday, 3rd March 2023**, so the supervisor can upload them to the ethics drive. The School Ethics Committee will review these applications, and decisions will be notified to students and their supervisors. If the decision is that supplementary information is required, students will have two weeks to provide this. No research can begin until the ethics process is complete – poorly completed applications will be returned until they meet the standard required. A dissertation which does not have ethical approval will not be graded. View the full Student Code.

### FAQ

Please refer to the School website by clicking [here](#) for answers to commonly asked questions.