

Straight to PhD

Straight-to-PhD Option in Geography at MSU

STUDENT APPLICATION

Student Requirements

Students interested in a “straight-to-PhD” option must meet the following criteria during the application phase:

- 1) Bachelor’s degree in Geography or related field.
- 2) At least a 3.5 GPA (or equivalent) and \geq 1150 GRE. (4 out of 6 on written)
- 3) Evidence of research activity, preferably submission of a lead authored refereed journal article. Other evidence of research activity, such as junior authorship on a journal article, poster presentation, Honor’s awards, or other scholarship may be accepted.
- Somewhat lower GPA and GRE requirements may be acceptable if evidence of evidence of exemplary scholarship exists, such as first or sole-authored publication, or in-hand external/internal (competitive) funding.

Application Protocol

- 1) The Straight-to-PhD option (box) must be selected.
- 2) Student references from an academic background must indicate that applicant is capable of completing a Straight-to-PhD option.
- 3) Student must provide a clear geographical research statement, including identification of a potential advisor at MSU Geo. This document is separate from the standard statement of purpose. We strongly encourage applicants to personally contact relevant faculty.
- 4) The application is reviewed internally according to standard procedures currently in place.
- 5) A decision is rendered by the Admissions Committee, which includes the following options:
 - a) Do not admit
 - b) Admit to MS program
 - c) Applicant is conditionally approved pending an interview.

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- 6) The applicant must interview with the Graduate Advisor and potential Research Advisor. Although this interview can be conducted by phone, a campus visit is encouraged.
- 7) After interviews, the Graduate Advisor and Research Advisor meet to render final decision to either admit to MS program or PhD program.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

This discussion applies only to those undergraduate students who have been admitted straight to the PhD program at MSU Geography. It is intended to provide the framework for a rigorous review of such students and their progress.

- 1) An undergraduate student admitted with normal funding straight to the PhD program will automatically receive 2 years of guaranteed funding, with an option for an additional 3 years of funding provided suitable progress is made toward the degree.
- 2) The student will be required to develop a good working relationship with the PhD advisor in the first year.
- 3) The student will be required to take Research Design (886) in the first year and develop the foundation for a research proposal.
- 4) The student must maintain an acceptable grade point average for a Ph.D.
- 5) The student must construct a 10-pg pre-proposal and defend it at a Departmental colloquium by the end of the 1st year.
- 6) At the end of the first year, the Graduate Committee reviews student progress, with input from Major Advisor.
- 7) Graduate Committee decides one of following outcomes:
 - a) Continue on track for Ph.D. with guaranteed funding.
 - b) Move to MS level with 1 more year of guaranteed funding.