



Faculty Document # 01-17 (Final Version)

Department of Geology and Geophysics Policy Regarding Guaranteed Support, to replace Staff Document 91.10 (which was modified by motions passed February 23, 1993), approved November 21, 2001 and December 5, 2001

1. The Department of Geology and Geophysics provides guaranteed support in the form of fellowships, research assistantships, project assistantships, or teaching assistantships to those students who successfully compete in a selection process that occurs early every Spring semester. For students coming to Madison with an undergraduate degree, the guarantee is for eight (8) semesters if the student intends to stay through the Ph.D, or for four (4) semesters towards the M.S. If the student already has an M.S. degree from another university, we guarantee a total of six (6) semesters of support for work toward a Ph.D. Outstanding applicants are also eligible for consideration for departmental support as a Weeks RA, which provides one year of funding in addition to the semesters included in the four to eight semesters of the Department's guarantee. Support in the form of semester or year-long appointments as research, project, or teaching assistantships may also be available to those not receiving a long term guarantee.
2. Those students who decide to come to graduate school without a guarantee of support may apply for support in subsequent years by submitting a request for consideration to the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

The request should be submitted in time to meet the application deadline for fall admission for the following academic year. It should include documents that would be useful to the Committee including an updated statement of purpose and three (3) supporting letters, one of which is from the student's major advisor. Normally, all three letters will be from professors in the Department. The purpose of this evaluation is to allow the Committee to assess progress and accomplishments since entering graduate school.

3. The initial four (4) semesters of guaranteed support for a student coming to Madison with an undergraduate degree will be used toward the M.S. Admission to the Ph.D. program and activation of the second four (4) semesters of guaranteed support is contingent on approval of the G&E Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee. Completion of the M.S. is required for activation of the second four (4) semester guarantee.

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A student who has not completed the M.S. degree two weeks prior to the start of the 5th semester of graduate work is not considered to be on the guarantee list for the purpose of TA appointments. A student in this status would be eligible for consideration for a one-semester TA appointment if the Department needs additional TAs to meet the requirements of courses being offered that semester. Such TA support for one semester would be considered as part of the Department's guarantee. If a student who has not completed the M.S. degree prior to the start of the 5th semester is supported in the 5th or a subsequent semester prior to completion of the M.S. on a research or project assistantship through the Department, the student will be considered to be using the Department's guarantee during the semester(s) of support.

4. In some cases a student who enters UW without an M.S. degree may obtain permission from the Graduate Studies Committee to proceed directly to the Ph.D. This requires a joint request from the student and the major advisor. The request should document the bases upon which the student and advisor have concluded that a waiver of the M.S. is appropriate. Examples of possible bases for the request include prior research and publication experience, post-baccalaureate training, experience as a working professional, public presentation of research results, demonstration of scientific writing skills, or exceptional academic performance. Students who intend to make such a request are encouraged to do so as soon as possible in order to plan for timely completion of Ph.D. language and minor requirements. In all cases, the request must be endorsed by the student's Guidance and Evaluation Committee and submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee for approval prior to the start of the student's 4th semester of graduate work. For a student who had been offered a support guarantee upon admission, approval to proceed directly to the Ph.D. will activate the second four (4) semester guarantee beyond the four (4) semesters normally used towards the M.S.
5. The Department is most appreciative of students who find outside support because this allows us to provide support to more students. The University allows fellowship students who are dissertators to hold 1/4 time teaching assistantships on a term-by-term basis and should check with their funding agency to make sure that the terms of the fellowship allow appointment as a teaching assistant. A student who, having received a guarantee, accepts an outside fellowship (e.g. from NSF, EPA or DOE) may use two semesters of the fellowship support to extend the Departmental guarantee period by two semesters. During additional semesters of fellowship support, beyond the initial two, the student will be considered to be using up the Department's guarantee.

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