

GEOSCIENCES M.S.

All students must meet the Requirements for the Master's Degree.

OVERVIEW

The Master of Science in Geosciences is a rigorous research program with grounding in related course work. Research programs include environmental geology; geomorphology; water resources; environmental (bio)geochemistry; mineralogy; sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic environments; geochronology and structural geology; tectonics; and the evolution of orogen. Examples of specific faculty interests include geologic history and recent sedimentation in the Lake Champlain Basin; processes and chronology of glaciation; water quality and pollutant transport; crystal chemistry and crystallography; molecular-scale environmental mineralogy; (bio)geochemical cycling in the critical zone; the tectonic evolution of continental margins and interiors; petrofabric and structural analysis of deformed rocks; partial melting and deep crustal processes; timing of deformation and rates of tectonic processes; and stratigraphy and sedimentary environments."

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for Admission to Graduate Studies for the Degree of Master of Science

- Bachelor's degree in geosciences or related field from an accredited institution with year-long courses in chemistry, physics, biology, and mathematics preferred. The M.S. program is also open to undergraduate majors in physics, chemistry, biology, engineering or mathematics who have accumulated 12 semester hours of course work in geosciences.
- Strong undergraduate record, letters of recommendation.

Applicants should identify a potential faculty advisor (or advisors) and include research interests in the application statement.

Acceptance to the program is a competitive process and admission is dependent upon available Teaching and/or Research Fellowships.

Minimum Degree Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

Admitted students will be assigned a 3-person advisory committee at the beginning of the first year of graduate study. The committee will prescribe a study program based on the interests of the student and the principal graduate advisor.

For the thesis option, successful writing, oral presentation and defense of a research thesis are required. Satisfactory completion will be determined by the candidate's thesis committee. Advanced courses in geology must total at least 30 semester hours, including 6 to 9 credits for thesis research. At least 6 credits of graded coursework must be at the 6000-level. Students enrolled in a traditional (thesis) M.S. cannot switch to the non-thesis option without prior approval from the thesis committee.

For the non-thesis option, at the time of enrollment the student must select a general area in which to write a project report. The report is the culmination of independent study and may be the result of an extensive literature search, fieldwork, laboratory work, or similar effort. The report must follow the general guidelines for writing a thesis and is subject to the principal advisor's approval. Advanced courses in geosciences must total at least 30 semester hours, including 3 to 6 credits for research. At least 6 credits of graded coursework must be at the 6000-level.

Both options require giving a public oral defense after the thesis or non-thesis research project is completed.

For both options, a minimum of 15 graded credits used in compilation of the graduate GPA must be taken in residence at UVM. Advanced courses in related sciences are encouraged and may be substituted for some selected geosciences courses on approval by the departmental advisor. With the prior approval of their department and the Graduate College, students may apply one 3000- or 4000-level, 3-credit undergraduate course towards their graduate program. A student's advisor must petition the Graduate College for approval before the student enrolls in the course. Consult individual programs for further limitations. Under no circumstances will a course numbered below 3000 be applicable to a master's program.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive exam for the Geosciences M.S. comprises 2 parts. Part 1 is a written research proposal and oral presentation that must be completed before the end of the second semester. The proposal must discuss the research objectives and their significance and include a work plan demonstrating feasibility. The presentation is followed by geosciences faculty/thesis committee questions that cover the assumptions, methodology, and the relationship of the proposed work to and its dependence on auxiliary sciences. Part 2 is a written progress report and oral presentation and must be completed before the end of the third semester. The progress report presents the latest research findings and must demonstrate sufficient progress toward the M.S. degree. Faculty/committee questions cover the data presented, interpretations, and work plan to complete the thesis.

Requirements for Advancement to Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Science

Advancement to candidacy requires satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination includes both a written and oral 1) research proposal and 2) progress report during the second and third semesters of enrollment, respectively.