Status

- Full-time GRAs must enroll in 9 or 10 credit hours during fall and spring, 6 credit hours during summer.
- Half-time GRAs must enroll in 6 credit hours during fall and spring, 3 credit hours during summer.
- During fall and spring terms, GRAs cannot only enroll in thesis hours. They must enroll in at least one 3 credit ESS/ATS course as well.

Program of Study (POS)

- The POS must be submitted before the end of the second semester.
- The advisor must ensure that the POS follows departmental guidelines.
- The advisor guides the student’s course selection for each semester.
- Questions regarding course offerings should be directed to the department chair.
- GRAs who have completed all the requirements of the POS need to take at least one 3 credit course every semester to enrich their experience in graduate school.

Thesis Research Major Concepts

Writing a thesis is one of the major milestones in the M.S. in ESS graduate program. Your advisor can help formulate and guide you in specific research areas. In general you must follow the following concepts for when formulating your thesis:

1. Define the Applied Science problem (It is important that you understand the needs of the decision making organization when defining the problem).
2. Define the tools (GIS/Remote Sensing) and data sets that you need.
3. Use the tools to address/study/solve the applied science question.
4. Develop frameworks for transitioning research to decision making.

Thesis Research Guidelines

- The advisor should guide in the selection of a research topic and help to formulate a thesis that can be completed in two years.
- The student should initiate regular meetings with their advisor. During the first year, meetings should be held every two weeks at the minimum. As the student progresses, meetings should be held weekly.
• The advisor monitors that consistent progress is being made toward completion of the thesis and minimizes distractions of other research activities.
• If supporting a GRA, the advisor must ensure that the student is working toward completion of specific deliverables on the grant/contract.
• If you are a GRA, remember that you are being paid for doing 20 hours of research. Therefore, adequate progress is necessary.
• The student should regularly read (at least five) peer reviewed papers every week so they will know the state of the art in terms of research. It is critical to know what has already been done in their topical area so they can make further progress. There is a direct correlation between lack of research progress and not reading papers. The advisor should encourage adequate reading.
• With the help of the advisor, the student forms a supervisory committee of two full time, tenure earning or tenured faculty members in the department plus one other from a decision making organization.
• The student must write a five page thesis proposal by the start of the third semester. This proposal should first be approved by the advisor, then the committee.
• Advisors recognize it is indeed a great opportunity to mentor a student toward writing a peer-reviewed paper based on their research.
• Students should work hard toward turning research into peer reviewed papers. Accomplishing this will signal to your advisor that you have the initiative and willingness to complete projects.
• Students should recognize that it is a unique opportunity to work in leading-edge research. Interacting with professors and fellow students is an integral component of the graduate experience.