MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOSCIENCES

The Master of Science in Geosciences provides an advanced degree that prepares students to work in private industry or government agencies, teach in community colleges or high schools, or continue postgraduate studies leading to a doctoral degree at another university. The graduate program also gives professional geoscientists an opportunity to update and upgrade their job skills.

The Department of Earth & Climate Sciences’ faculty has expertise in geology, meteorology, oceanography, and paleoclimate — fields critical to understanding many environmental problems, such as air and water contamination, active faulting, coastal erosion, and global warming. There are no formal concentrations within the M.S. program, but most students choose to emphasize research that is aligned with the faculty area of expertise. We encourage students to work on interdisciplinary projects, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area. We also encourage students to develop linkages with other departments in the university, and with agencies and firms in the local region.

Admission to the Program

The Department of Earth & Climate Sciences is committed to recruiting and supporting a diverse group of graduate students with the potential to develop into excellent scientists. We offer limited financial support in the following ways:

The John A. and Anna Monteverdi Fellowship

The Monteverdi Fellowship provides one year of significant support to graduate students in the Department of Earth & Climate Sciences who are graduate students who demonstrate outstanding academic merit and financial need. The fellowship award of $10,000 per academic year (renewal for second academic year contingent on good research progress) can be used to pay for tuition, fees, books, and any other expenses that you may incur. A condition of the fellowship is that you register for 6 or more units each semester.

The Department Teaching Fellowship

The Teaching Fellowship is designed to support students with a strong interest in strengthening their teaching and communication skills in addition to their scientific research. The fellowship provides the opportunity to teach up to two sections for two years (contingent on strong student and faculty evaluations of their teaching). Students with this fellowship will be required to attend SCI 750 (Science Teaching for Scientists).

Other Sources of Support

Depending on available funding, the Department of Earth & Climate Sciences or individual faculty may be able to support additional students as Graduate Teaching Assistants, student assistant, or research assistants.

Application Process

A critical step to being accepted to the MS Program in the Department of Earth & Climate Sciences is identifying a research mentor. We therefore strongly encourage students to email faculty they are interested in beginning the M.S. program, in consultation with a faculty advisor and the graduate coordinator.

To be considered for admission to the master’s program as a classified graduate student, applicants must:

- Satisfy the University admission requirements.
- Have a bachelor’s degree in one of the geosciences (geology, meteorology, or oceanography) or a related discipline.
- Have a 3.0 GPA in their earned undergraduate degree or last 60 semester (90 quarter) units completed.
- Provide letters of recommendation from at least two people familiar with the applicant’s previous academic work and/or professional accomplishments.
- Submit a statement of purpose. The statement should address the following questions
  - What are your main research interests and why?
  - Which faculty member(s) are you interested in working with directly?
  - Describe your financial need
  - Describe your interest in teaching and/or your interest as working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

Applicants lacking the appropriate background may be admitted as conditionally classified graduate students. These students must complete additional coursework that will not be counted toward the degree requirements. Conditionally admitted students may take courses but cannot file an Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form until all deficiencies have been satisfied.

The Department of Earth & Climate Sciences will meet three times to review applications for the Fall semester. Applications that are completed by January 15 are considered in the first round of reviews and be considered for financial support (NOTE: Applicants who want to be considered for Department fellowships and other financial support must
submit their application by January 15th). If seats remain available in the program, the committee will consider applicants who complete their applications by February 15th. During the final meeting, the committee will consider applicants who complete their applications by March 1st.

All application material should be submitted at [https://www2.calstate.edu/apply](https://www2.calstate.edu/apply)

If you have questions about the program or application process, please contact the graduate coordinator (Mary Leech; leech@sfsu.edu).

Written English Proficiency Requirement

Each graduate student is required to demonstrate an acceptable level of written English proficiency on two levels:

**Level One**
Satisfied by obtaining a score of 4.0 or better on the analytical writing component of the GRE. If the score is 3.5 or less students will be required to take [SCI 614](#) during their first semester of graduate studies.

**Level Two**
Satisfied by completion of a written thesis ([ERTH 898](#)).

Advancement to Candidacy

To be advanced to candidacy, each student must:

- Satisfy level one of the written English proficiency requirement.
- Satisfy all course deficiencies stipulated upon entrance into the master’s program.
- Choose a faculty advisor and complete a research proposal that has been approved by the student’s thesis committee.
- File an Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form.

Geosciences (M.S.) — Minimum 30 units

**Required Courses (17 units)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERTH 700</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar in Geosciences</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERTH 701</td>
<td>Research Methods in Geosciences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERTH 702</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods in Geosciences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERTH 897</td>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERTH 898</td>
<td>Master's Thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
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**Elective Courses (13 units)**

Upper division or graduate elective courses on advisement.

All students must present an oral thesis defense to the Earth & Climate Sciences faculty and students.

Elective units are chosen from courses offered by the Department or other University departments, and must be selected by students in consultation with their faculty advisors. At least 6 units must be courses numbered 700 or higher, and 6 units must be courses offered in the Earth & Climate Sciences Department.

To help prepare for their careers, graduate students are strongly encouraged to serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) for at least one semester. GTAs typically teach lab sections attached to lectures in introductory, general education courses in geology (ERTH 112, ERTH 210, ERTH 230), meteorology (ERTH 162), and oceanography (ERTH 172). To support their professional development in teaching, GTAs are strongly encouraged to enroll in a professional development course such as [SCI 750](#).