Welcome to the UBC Department of Geography!
As one of the top geography graduate programs in the world, UBC Geography strives to ensure that your experience in our program provides a solid foundation on which to build your future career. This document briefly outlines some points related to your stay in our Department.
Your key contact during your program is your grad program manager (gradprogram@geog.ubc.ca).

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KEYS: To request a key for your office, computer lab, labs and photocopy room, fill out the key request form sitting in your student inbox (one week prior to the start of term) and hand the completed form and a $20 refundable deposit to Connie Cheung (Room 220, 8:30am-4:30pm) by September 10th. Once your order is processed, which can take a week, the UBC Key Desk will send you an e-mail indicating your keys are ready for pick up at their office. UBC will require an additional $20 refundable deposit. If you require building access evenings and weekends, bring your UBC card to Ms. Cheung for activation.

PHONES: You may use the telephone in Room 240 for local calls (dial the five-digit UBC extension or dial 9 and the 10-digit local number).

COMPUTERS: Computer stations in our labs require a login account. Pick up your account info from Room 240B (Vincent Kujala, 10am-6pm) or 240C (Julie Ranada, 8am-4pm). They will also give you a geography email address. Information on how to link to wifi and other computing related questions will be posted in this space closer to the start of term. There are stations available at GIC (Room 112) that do not require accounts. If you have IT questions, please email support@geog.ubc.ca.

PHOTOCOPY/PRINT ACCOUNTS: Grads can use the department’s photocopier for 8 cents/page (Rm 248) and lab printers for 10 cents/page (black & white). To use this service, you must put money on your account, which you do at the main office (Rm 217). A refund of unused credit is available at the end of each term.

MAILBOXES: The graduate mail boxes are located to your left as you walk into the main office. Mail is sorted alphabetically by last name. Check for new mail when you arrive.

LIBRARY CARD/STUDENT ID: Go to the UBC bookstore to get your library card/student ID. Visit www.ubccard.ubc.ca for more information.

KITCHEN: Grad students share a kitchen facility with faculty and staff on the 2nd floor (Room 227). Coffee and tea is available for a fee, which is administered by the department coffee committee. All students are required to pay $10 bond to Sandy Lapsky (Room 226). When you purchase tea or coffee from the lounge, you must mark it on the chart by the door. If you are the person to use the last of the coffee, make/ready a new pot for the next client.

GRAD LOUNGE: Graduate students have their own lounge in room 140 of the Geography building. Students can access this room with their key 6G5A.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTRE (GIC): The Department has its own library - the Geographic Information Centre. The GIC offers support services for students, faculty and the general public. Holdings include a book collection, Masters and PhD Theses, atlases, maps specializing in BC, video recordings, course reserves and the University Aerial Photo Collection. Contact: Room 112, gic@geog.ubc.ca, http://gic.geog.ubc.ca/
**SCHOLARSHIPS/FUNDING:** All students without external funding are required to apply for the Affiliated and SSHRC/NSERC awards in the autumn term. Details will be sent via email. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoc Studies (F+GPS) offers workshops on how to apply for funding. For more information, visit [www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca). There is also limited travel and research funding available from the department and F+GPS ([www.geog.ubc.ca/graduate/travelfund.html](http://www.geog.ubc.ca/graduate/travelfund.html)).

**SUPERVISOR RELATIONS:** Your supervisor acts as your personal guide in your learning experience. Good communication plays an important part in this relationship. Questions to ask your supervisor are:

- Who is on my research committee? Who calls supervisory committee meetings and how often?
- Will I be given office desk space or lab space? Are you able to provide me with a computer?
- How often do you anticipate us meeting? What courses should I take?
- What is the Spring Review, when is it held?
- Am I expected to cover office supplies/photocopying/field work fees?
- Is there funding available for travel to conferences (outside of the FOGS/Departmental stipend)?
- What types of research funds/scholarship/grant/award opportunities are there?
- (PhD) What do I need to do to prepare for candidacy? What is my deadline to achieve candidacy?
- Where do I register so that I have UBC’s permission to research or present overseas?

A handbook on student-supervisor relations is also available at [www.grad.ubc.ca/handbook-graduate-supervision](http://www.grad.ubc.ca/handbook-graduate-supervision). If you would like to discuss your program with another department representative, you can contact the graduate advisor or grad staff.

**HOUSING:** Listing of off-campus housing alternatives can be found at the UBC Alma Mater Society site [www.amsrentsline.com](http://www.amsrentsline.com), or you can try Craigslist ([vancouver.craigslist.org](http://vancouver.craigslist.org)). There are residences on campus ([www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/life-vancouver-canada/accommodation-housing](http://www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/life-vancouver-canada/accommodation-housing)).

**NEIGHBOURHOODS:** Property is expensive in Vancouver. Rent tends to decrease as you move east & south from UBC. You can find information on Vancouver neighbourhoods at [www.vancouverguide.ca](http://www.vancouverguide.ca).

**STUDENT VISAS (international students):** To obtain your visa, you will need a valid passport, statement of acceptance into UBC and a statement that shows your funding/financial status. For info, visit [www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study.asp). To obtain a copy of your letter of enrollment, log into [https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca](https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca), view the options under “grades and records”.

**SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER (SIN) (international students):** International students must apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN). This will allow you receive payment for work. To obtain a SIN, visit a Human Resources Canada Centre with your valid study permit, passport and a contract of employment (see grad staff for special contract). Application forms are available at the International House or online. Contact a Student Advisor at [isa@students.ubc.ca](mailto:isa@students.ubc.ca), 604.822.5021 or visit [http://students.ubc.ca/international](http://students.ubc.ca/international) for more details.

**MEDICAL INSURANCE:** Ensure you are registered for the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP) and BC Pharmacare. Information on how to register and/or to pay your premiums is available online at [www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp) or you can call them at 604-683-7151. For information on BC PharmaCare, visit [www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/).
UBC PAYROLL: If you have been hired as a department teaching or research assistant, you will be paid twice a month. If you have been hired on an hourly appointment (such as Work Study), you will be paid on the 8th and 23rd of a month, one week after timesheet submission. To set up a direct deposit for payroll, fill out the form at http://www.finance.ubc.ca/sites/finance.ubc.ca/files/uploads/payroll/documents/dirdeposit.pdf. To view pay stubs and T4s, go to www.msp.ubc.ca and login with your employee ID. For more information visit www.finance.ubc.ca/payroll.

GRADUATE SUPPORT INITIATIVE AWARD (GSI): Students with GSI funding will be paid the first week of each term. Funding will first go towards your tuition fees and outstanding fees on your SSC account. To activate the award you must login to your SSC account and accept it. Instructions on collecting any excess amount and other frequently asked questions can be found in the right-hand column on the SSC webpage once you login. Keep in mind these payment dates when developing your budget.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: Students are automatically enrolled in the U-Pass program. U-Pass acts as a monthly transit pass for buses, seabus and skytrains. You can pick it up at the UBC Robson Square, the UBC Bookstore or in the SUB. Plan your trip at www.translink.ca. To get to UBC from downtown, catch the #4 on Granville St, or the #44 on Burrard (only during peak hours). If you forget your Upass, remember to have exact change for the bus driver.

BIKING: There are a number of designated bike routes and bike parking in the area and throughout downtown. There are also marked bike paths along the seawall / seaside. UBC (http://transportation.ubc.ca/) has a map of bike and shower facilities around campus. For used bikes, repairs and maintenance, the Bike Kitchen in the Student Union Building (SUB) has affordable rates.

COURSE REGISTRATION: To register for your courses, log into your SSC account at https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/servlets/SRVSSCFramework. This site also provides you with information on your awards, tuition, letters of registration (for visa purposes) and grades. UBC will email you with further information prior to the opening of your registration dates. All master students must enroll themselves in GEOG 599. All doctoral students must be enrolled in GEOG 699. Registration for 2014W opens near the end of June.
TEACHING ASSISTANTS: New TAs are invited to a training session during the first week of September. New TAs, who have never previously attended this workshop, will be given 6 hours from their work contract to attend. For info on TA policies refer to your offer letter or email gradprogram@geog.ubc.ca.

AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION: The Canada Line metro runs from the airport to downtown. From there, buses depart to other parts of Vancouver. A taxi from the airport to UBC costs more than $40 + tip. For students travelling directly to UBC from the airport, catch the Canada Line SkyTrain to the ‘Broadway – City Hall’ station and change to the #99 UBC Bus (on Broadway) to the last stop.

COMMUNICATIONS: Check out www.geog.ubc.ca or http://blogs.ubc.ca/geognews/ for information on department events, jobs, orientation guides, forms, policies, etc. Feel free to submit to the Department’s newsletter. Email Mimi Yu at mimi.yu@geog.ubc.ca for details.

PROFESSIONALS LEADERSHIP NETWORK: The Department is sponsoring the development of a network of Geography leaders in the area, which regularly hosts events open to grads. It is an excellent way for students to make research and professional connections. Students who participate in the mentorship program are eligible for membership in this Network. Email gradprogram@geog.ubc.ca for info.

DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT: UBC Geography maintains a wide range of equipment which students can use for educational and research purposes. Items include digital recorders, transcription pedals, camcorders, etc. For information contact Bret Petersen (breton.petersen@geog.ubc.ca or room 206).

CARTOGRAPHER SERVICES: For a fee, Cartographic Services, located in Room 240 D, offers map production support for books, journal articles, posters, and dynamic cartography, using mapping and graphic design software. Contact Eric Leinberger at eric.leinberger@geog.ubc.ca.

OVERSEAS RESEARCH & TRAVEL: Going overseas? UBC students are required to register at http://safetyabroad.ubc.ca/.

EVENTS IN GEOGRAPHY

Graduate Orientation
Wednesday, September 3rd
Room 223
Details will be sent to incoming students closer to the date

Graduate Retreat to Whistler
Usually the 1st weekend in October, TBA
AMS Whistler Lodge, 2124 Nordic Drive, Whistler
The Geography Grad students rent the beautiful AMS hostel in Whistler for a night in October. On this overnight retreat you’ll have the chance to get to know fellow students, sightsee, participate in outdoor activities, eat delicious food, or test out the Whistler nightlife. The total cost is very reasonable, and the hostel is clean and cozy with a communal kitchen, hardwood floors, hot tub/sauna, and a fireplace! We will organize a carpool list and a hike, details of which will be announced closer to the date. www.ubcwhistlerlodge.com/
Geography Beer Gardens
Usually Fridays, Undergraduate Lounge, TBA
Three or four Fridays every term, the Geography Students Association (GSA, www.ubcgsa.ca) holds a beer garden from 4-8pm. After a long week of work, these evenings are a great time to catch up and relax over a well-priced pint or pop.

Geography Home Seminars
Geography home seminars encourage graduate students to present their research to peers, faculty and staff in an informal setting. The seminars are classified into human and physical geography topics. The schedule is arranged during term and can be viewed at www.geog.ubc.ca/department/seminars.html. Presentation formats range from discussion circles on preliminary research design to polished thesis/dissertation summaries or conference presentations. Giving one is a great opportunity to get some feedback on your ideas in a relaxed environment. And attending them is a great way to meet grads at different stages of the program.

Development Seminars
These seminars take place over the academic year and offer students exposure to opportunities and networks for research purposes and in job searches. Details are sent to students via email (listserv).

Spring Graduate Symposium
All second year master-level students are required to present at the spring graduate symposium. The annual event takes place around the beginning of May and students are encouraged to attend to listen and discuss the research being conducted by our grads. This event is open to the public.

TA Training Workshop
At the beginning of the academic year, the department hosts a TA training workshop. It is a comprehensive review of strategies to help you manage your workload as well as effective teaching and marking techniques. This is a popular event. TAs and prospective TAs are encouraged to attend.

Other
Look out for emails over the listserv for other social activities. Past events have included:

- Bowling nights
- Ice skating and curling outings
- Happy hours at different neighborhood pubs
- Pot luck BBQs at the beach

HELPFUL LINKS

Geography Graduate Association
The GGA (The Geography Graduate Association) is the body that represents all graduate students in the department. Its purpose is to support the diverse needs of both human and physical Master’s and Doctoral students. Meetings are 2-3 times/semester, with the annual general meeting in September. All students are encouraged

Graduate Student Society: http://gss.ubc.ca/main/

Transport:

- Translink (www.translink.bc.ca) – local transit maps, fares and schedules.
- BC Ferries (www.bcferries.com) – ferry schedules to Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.
- Yellow Cabs (604-681-1111) and Black Cabs (604-721-1111).

Off-campus accommodation:
Student facilities:
- Alma Mater Society (www.ams.ubc.ca/index.cfm) – the student society of UBC. This website has many useful health, job, and lifestyle links. Join one of the many student groups, sign up for a recreational class or book a bed in UBC’s Whistler Lodge.
- UBC Library Services (www.library.ubc.ca)
- International House (http://students.ubc.ca/international)

Community:
- Georgia Straight (www.straight.com) – a free Vancouver newspaper published weekly which includes a comprehensive entertainment guide (movies, restaurants, galleries, community events).
- Volunteer Vancouver (www.volunteervancouver.ca) – list of volunteer opportunities.
- City of Vancouver (http://vancouver.ca) – from community calendars to the recycling schedule.
- BC Parks and Recreation (http://www.bcparks.ca)

Health:  Information on the AMS/GSS Student Health Plan can be found at: www.ams.ubc.ca/content.cfm?ID=17

International Students:  Information about a variety of international needs can be found at: www.international.ubc.ca/

Liu Scholars Program (PhD students):  http://www.ligi.ubc.ca/scholar_program.htm

English Language Support Services:  http://www.students.ubc.ca/international/international-students/academics/english-language-support/

For more orientation information, visit:

http://blogs.ubc.ca/geograds/

Or

https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/newly-admitted/grad-guide

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a place of mind
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