

**Department of Geography
& Environmental Studies**

Student Handbook

2022-2023

Toronto Metropolitan University
Program in Geographic Analysis
Program in Environment and Urban Sustainability
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
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Preamble and Disclaimer

This handbook is designed to provide students in Geographic Analysis and Environment and Urban Sustainability with helpful information about their programs, the Department and the University. It is designed as a supplement to other principal documents that students should use to guide their academic careers. These include:

[Student Code of Academic Conduct](#)

[Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct](#)

[The Full-Time Undergraduate Calendar](#)

[The Student Guide](#)

[All current policies and procedures at Ryerson](#)

In the event of any contradictions between this handbook and the above documents, the above documents shall be deemed correct. This document is only available on the [Department of Geography and Environmental Studies website](#). The web document is linked throughout and is therefore a convenient way to find answers to questions you might have.

The handbook will be updated as frequently as required and at least once every year. We welcome comments about how it can be improved.

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Department and General Information

About the Department

The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (established in 1974) is part of the Faculty of Arts and is located on the 6th floor of Jorgenson Hall, with two undergraduate labs (POD346 and POD348) on the 3rd floor of the Podium Building.

The Department currently offers a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Geographic Analysis, a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Environment and Urban Sustainability, and a Master of Spatial Analysis (MSA) degree jointly with Toronto Metropolitan's Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity. It also offers two post-graduate Certificates in Applied Digital Geography and GIS, and a Certificate in Demographic Analysis through Toronto Metropolitan University's Chang School of Continuing Education. (Please note that these certificates are not available to BA (Hons.) program students).

The Department also teaches Liberal Studies and Professionally-Related courses to students in other programs at Ryerson.

Contact Directory

Degree:	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Geographic Analysis (GA) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Environment & Urban Sustainability (EUS)
Department Chair:	Dr. David Atkinson
Program Directors:	Dr. Claus Rinner (GA) Dr. Andrew Millward (EUS)
Department Staff:	Christina Smith , Departmental Administrator Sarah Carmichael , Undergraduate Program Administrator (GA) Mindy Vuong , Undergraduate Program Administrator (EUS)
Arts IT Team:	Michael MacDonald , Lead IT & GIS Network Specialist Dereje Mekeuria , IT Specialist

[Ricardo Gomez-Hervis](#), Computer Systems Technician

Department Council: The Departmental Council is composed of all faculty, two Undergraduate Program Administrators, one Departmental Administrator, one IT Administrator, a graduate student representative, and one student representative from each of the four years of each undergraduate program. The Council discusses issues of mutual concern to all, approves changes to curriculum and performs other duties as required by Toronto Metropolitan.¹

SAGA: The [Student Association for Geographic Analysis](#) (SAGA) is the student union for the GA program and is actively representing the more than 300 students in the program in departmental matters and in the larger Toronto Metropolitan University context through the Toronto Metropolitan Students' Union (RSU). Executive positions include: president, vice-president finance, social event coordinators, departmental liaison, and technical advisor.

EUSSA The [Environment and Urban Sustainability Student Association](#) (EUSSA) is the student union for the program. EUSSA has an active social media presence, is organizing program-related events, and communicates with the Department on behalf of over 300 EUS students.

All interested students should contact their Undergraduate Program Administrator for more information about getting involved.

Who's Who in the Department?

The Department is comprised of three groups of people: students, faculty and staff.

The most important group is the students – that's you – who come here to obtain an education. There are approximately 600 students across both undergraduate programs and about 50 graduate students. These numbers vary slightly from year to year.

Faculty members are your professors and they are either drawn from the Department itself (your program course instructors and the people you will get to know the best), or from Toronto Metropolitan at large (your liberal studies and professionally-related course instructors). Your professors are experts in their respective fields and are committed to

¹ *Constitutional Provisions for Department/School Councils*. Ryerson Polytechnic University, Academic Policies and Procedures, Ref. Number 45

providing you with the best education. All they ask of you is that you be committed to getting the best education you can.

The Department staff are the people who keep the administration and technical operations of the Department working. We have two Undergraduate Program Administrators and one Department Administrator, who help, principally, the Chair in the academic, administrative and financial management of the department. The IT Specialists and Technician keep our labs and computer network functioning.

Contact information for all faculty and staff can be found by clicking on the [Faculty and Staff link](#) on the departmental website.

Significant Dates

Life in university is ruled by deadlines – for assignments, tests, and final exams, for courses to be added and dropped, for fees payment, and many more events. [Click here](#) for Toronto Metropolitan's significant dates for 2022-2023. Due dates for assignments and tests are given to you on your course outlines at the beginning of the terms. Dates and times for final exams are released by the Registrar's office towards the end of the term. For exam updates, [click here](#).

Academic Standings - What They Mean

It is the student's responsibility to maintain a **CLEAR** academic standing in order to continue in his/her program from term to term without limitations. At Toronto Metropolitan University, each student's academic standing is determined at the end of each academic term, based on the student's final course grades. The following definitions are taken directly from [the Full-time Undergraduate Calendar](#).

1. **CLEAR** - a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 1.67 (except where the student has violated an approved Department/School Standing variation or, while on Probation, the student has violated the terms of their Probationary Contract). Students with CLEAR Standing may continue their program studies with no restrictions except for the obligation to satisfy prerequisite requirements.
2. **PROBATIONARY** - a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 1.00 to 1.66. Students with PROBATIONARY Standing are required to have a developmental Probationary Contract outlining a specific plan for studies and academic supports authorized by their program School or Department, and signed by the student. Students who fail to have such a Probationary Contract within five (5) working days of the first day of the

semester will have their course registrations and course intention requests cancelled for the term in question.

Students with a PROBATIONARY Standing at the start of any semester will be eligible to continue their studies in a subsequent semester as long as they achieve a term grade point average (TGPA) of 1.67 or higher and provided they meet the terms of their Probationary Contract and do not violate approved Department/School Standing variations. Failure to meet the terms of the Probationary Contract as set out by the School or Department will result in the student being REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW (RTW) from their Toronto Metropolitan University program.

Except for students who follow the Student Success Program outlined below, who may attain a CLEAR Standing, students who are reinstated to their program after an RTW Standing return on PROBATION. Some programs may reinstate students with a Probationary Contract which may significantly restrict course load and require successful completion of a specific program course(s). Programs may also specify grades which must be achieved.

3. **REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW (RTW)** - Students will be REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW from their program for one of the following reasons:
 - i. A CGPA of less than 1.00 (except students enrolled in their first semester); **or**
 - ii. A term GPA below 1.67 while on PROBATION; **or**
 - iii. Violation of any approved Department/School Standing variation; **or**
 - iv. Violation of a Probationary Contract (including unauthorized changes to the contract or failure to negotiate a Probationary Contract).

No student in their first semester at Ryerson will be RTW in December. Students with a GPA of less than 1.00 in their first semester will be advised about their prospects for success. Such students who continue in their program for the subsequent Winter semester will do so on PROBATION.

Schools/Departments, at their discretion, may issue a special contract in cases where the program judges the student to have a realistic chance of achieving a CLEAR Standing in the semester following assignment of RTW by taking up to two (2) courses. Students remain RTW during this semester. If the student fails to achieve a CGPA of 1.67 at the end of that semester, s/he will remain RTW. If the student is successful, s/he will return as CLEAR.

Procedures for RTW students who wish to be considered for reinstatement to their program:

In the semester immediately following the assignment of RTW Standing (for this purpose Spring/Summer is included): Students may not enroll in any Ryerson credit course(s) and no course(s) taken at another institution will be counted towards graduation requirements for a Toronto Metropolitan University degree program.

In the second semester following assignment of RTW Standing - Student Success Program

i) Students may request to participate in a defined Student Success Program (SSP) under an SSP participation contract. Students will be allowed to take up to two (2) credit courses, and may be required to participate in other activities or workshops designed to address their needs. Courses taken as part of the SSP will be included in the student's CGPA. Criteria for participation, terms of the contract and the required outcomes will be established by the program. Programs, including part-time programs, will provide information each year on the usual criteria used for participation in the SSP. Students may participate in an SSP only once during their academic careers at Toronto Metropolitan University. Normally withdrawal from, or unsuccessful completion of an SSP will constitute one attempt.

ii) Students approved by a program to participate in the SSP will be designated as having an EXTENDED ACADEMIC PROBATION (EAP) Standing. See EXTENDED ACADEMIC PROBATION Standing below.

iii) Students who do not successfully complete their second semester contract return to RTW Standing, and may apply to be reinstated to their program for the semester following the third semester. Prior to reinstatement, these students may not enroll in any Ryerson credit course and no courses taken at another institution will be counted towards graduation requirements for a Toronto Metropolitan degree program.

Students who are not eligible for the SSP, or who do not wish to participate in the SSP, may apply to be reinstated to their program after the third semester following assignment of RTW. Prior to reinstatement, these students may not enroll in any Ryerson credit course(s) and no courses taken at another institution will be counted towards graduation requirements for a Toronto Metropolitan degree program.

In the third semester following assignment of RTW Standing:

Students who successfully complete the requirements of their second semester SSP contract, will be given a further SSP contract, which may allow them to take up to four (4) credit courses. Courses taken as part of the SSP will be included in the student's CGPA. The terms of the contract and the required outcomes will be established by the program, including part-time programs. Programs, including part-time programs, will provide information each year on the usual criteria used for evaluating acceptable

performance in the SSP. Students approved by a program to participate in the SSP will be designated as having an EXTENDED ACADEMIC PROBATION Standing.

Students who do not successfully complete their third semester contract return to RTW Standing, and may apply to be reinstated to their program for the semester following the third semester. Prior to reinstatement, these students may not enroll in any Toronto Metropolitan credit course(s) and no courses taken at another institution will be counted towards graduation requirements for a Toronto Metropolitan degree program.

Procedures for students who are assigned an RTW Standing and wish to be considered for transfer to another program:

Students must consult with the University Undergraduate Admissions Office and the program to which they wish to transfer. At the program's discretion, a student may follow an SSP sequence as outlined above. Such students will be placed on EAP Standing. If approved for such a transfer SSP, there is an understanding that the transfer program commits to admitting the student pending successful completion of the SSP. Students may apply for transfer for the semester following the third semester as defined above. Applications for transfer will be considered as outlined below.

Procedures for reinstatement or transfer after the period of RTW or Extended Academic Probation:

Students who successfully complete their third semester SSP contract are automatically reinstated to their program, and do not need to apply. They may return as CLEAR or on PROBATION.

Students who did not successfully complete their second or third semester SSP contract, or who did not participate in the SSP, may apply for reinstatement for the semester following the third semester.

Applications for reinstatement will be considered by Faculty and/or program committees based on criteria, assessments and/or procedures developed by the Faculty or program in consultation with the Registrar's Office. Past academic performance and space availability will normally be considerations. Programs, including part-time programs, will provide information each year on the usual criteria used for evaluation of reinstatement applications.

Applications for transfer will be considered by the University Undergraduate Admissions Office in consultation with Faculty and/or program admission committees. Past academic performance and space availability will normally be considerations.

Students who are reinstated to their program or are approved for transfer upon successful application or successful completion of an SSP, will be reinstated or

transferred with PROBATION or CLEAR Standing based on their past academic performance. If they proceed as PROBATIONARY students, they will be required to have a Probationary Contract as outlined above.

4. **Extended Academic Probation for First- Time RTW Students**-EXTENDED ACADEMIC PROBATION (EAP) is a special, provisional Academic Standing available only to first-time RTW students who participate in a defined Student Success Program as described above.

To remain EAP, students must fulfill all required components in each of the two semesters of the SSP. Students deemed not to be meeting the program-specified requirements at any time will be withdrawn from the SSP, and will return to RTW Standing.

5. **PERMANENT PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL** - Students will be Permanently Withdrawn from their program for the following reasons:

- i. Any academic performance that would result in 'REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW' Standing for a second time; **or**

- ii. Failure of a course required by their program for a third time; **or**

- iii. Failure to meet the terms of a Probationary Contract following return after an RTW Standing; **or**

- iv. Denial of reinstatement to their program for a second time.

Students who are Permanently Withdrawn from a program may not apply for reinstatement into that program. Students who are Permanently Withdrawn from a program may apply to a different program for the Fall semester of the following calendar year.

6. **DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSION** - Students who have been placed on DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSION (DS) for Student Code of Conduct violations will not be permitted to enroll in any course at the University during their period of DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSION. Students who have served their period of DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSION must contact their Department/School to make arrangements for reinstatement.

Academic Integrity

Toronto Metropolitan University and the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies take academic integrity very seriously. According to university policy, the minimum penalty for undergraduate students is a grade reduction on any academic work, ranging in severity up to and including a grade of “zero” (0) on the work. The Principle of Progressive Discipline increases the penalties/consequences assigned with repeated violations.

It is your responsibility to know what constitutes academic misconduct. You must review the [Toronto Metropolitan University Student Code of Academic Conduct](#).

Toronto Metropolitan University also has a very informative website on [Academic Integrity](#).

If in doubt, consult with your instructor(s). Do not assume that you know the rules. Different professors have somewhat different rules about working with other people. In particular, ask your professor what the rules are in relationship to working together on labs.

Staying Out of Academic Trouble

What are the common reasons students get into academic difficulty?

Most students who get into academic difficulty do so because they do not communicate fast enough with their instructor(s), the Undergraduate Program Administrator, the Undergraduate Program Director, or the Chair that they are having problems. These problems, in our experience, are usually personal problems (e.g. home-related or financial), medical problems (e.g. health or psychological problems caused by stress), or they are related to the transition to university life (e.g. academic workload, poor time management, working at a job too much). *They are not normally related to lack of academic ability.*

Often students do not realize that university is very different from high school. You may feel that you must “go it alone” (i.e. asking for help shows weakness). You may be in shock when you get your lowest mark ever on your first test. You may have been in the top 10% of your class in high school; but if everyone else in your class was also in the top 10% you may find your marks are much lower than you think they should be. You may need to develop new methods of studying. You may need to deal with no longer being top of the class. You need help.

You do not have something due this week, so you believe you have nothing to do. You have two hours before your last class of the day. You start to think like a high school student – I have a two hour spare – so you play computer games. Perhaps some weeks you decide not to stick around because those two hours are a waste. So you miss some classes. You need help.

When you get behind in your work, you may tell yourself that you can easily catch up. But this is not easy to do without a plan, and if you have never had to do it before you may find developing that plan difficult to do. You need help.

Because you have few assignments and few tests you may be tempted to think you have little to do. But you are expected to spend 3 hours outside of class for every hour in class. You are expected to have done reading assignments even if they are not discussed in class. You are expected to come to class even if it covers reading material and even when it covers material that was not assigned.

Being a student is a full time job. Only part of what you learn here is course content. Part of what you learn here is how to learn. Part of what you learn here is how to manage your time. Part of what you learn here is how to work in a group. Part of what you learn here when to ask for help. Part of what you learn here is how to think like a professional.

A professional thinks - this workload is stressing me out, I need to find out how to de - stress. A professional thinks - I am bummed out about this low mark. I need help to figure out how not to obsess about this low mark. I need to find out how to learn from a low mark. I need to figure out a better way to study for tests. A professional thinks – great. On Tuesday afternoons I have two free hours between classes. That will be the time I devote to work on that essay. The essay will be finished in time with little stress.

What should I do if I think I am failing a course or otherwise heading for a non-clear standing?

There are a number of things that you must do if we are to help you steer clear of academic problems.

1. Identify the fact that you may be having problems early by monitoring your term work carefully. If you are failing your assignments and your tests, it is likely that you will fail the course. You need to act promptly.
2. You must be prepared to ask yourself some serious questions:
 - *Am I getting into trouble because I'm working at a job too much?* If so, you need to cut back on your hours or consider dropping a course.
 - *Am I having trouble with the level of difficulty in the course?* If so, speak with the instructor. Don't be shy. Instructors are there to help you and would much rather see you succeed than fail.
 - *Am I having personal or health difficulties?* If so speak with the Undergraduate Program Administrator or the Undergraduate Program Director. They can direct you to the appropriate people at Toronto Metropolitan who can help you – and perhaps save your term.

What should I do if I just can't handle the course material and know I'm going to fail?

This is perhaps the most important question and the one with the easiest answer to prevent you from ending up with a non-clear status. You can drop the course before the last drop date for that

term. This date is shown in the [Significant Dates](#) section of the calendar. It is usually early in November for the fall term and early March for the winter term. You may want to discuss this course of action with the course instructor or the Undergraduate Program Director before you make your decision. There is very little anyone in the department can do for you once you end up with a non-clear academic status. And a failing grade (the 'F') cannot be removed from your transcript once it is there.

What happens if I do drop the course?

By dropping the course, you will prevent an 'F' and likely keep your academic standing clear. You will have to re-take either that course (if it is a required course) or another course to make it up.

If I drop a course, how do I catch up in order to graduate on time?

You will usually still be able to finish your degree within four years, depending on the year you are in and the course in question. Since you are able to take liberal studies and professionally related courses from the Chang School during the Spring and Summer semesters, it is often possible to pick up the course you had to drop, or a similar one. If you had to drop a professional course, you could take an extra liberal studies or professionally related course in the Spring or Summer to make room for the professional course you need to retake in the Fall or Winter semester. The Undergraduate Program Administrator or the Undergraduate Program Director will be able to advise you accordingly.

The main thing is to speak with the Undergraduate Program Administrator or the Undergraduate Program Director before it is too late to do anything about failing grades.

Remember that your goal and our (the department, all the staff, and your instructors) goal is for you to graduate. Taking an extra term and graduating is better than not graduating at all.

Course Variation

Course variation refers to the amount and types of variation that are appropriate among different sections of the same course. If you are enrolled in a large class with multiple sections and instructors, the course description and the overall objectives will be consistent with comparable assignment structures and grading schemes. Please refer to your course outline for more information about variations between sections of your course.

Attendance and Class Participation

Course Instructors will determine whether class attendance is a basis for grades. Please refer to your course outline for more information as class participation grades will differ from course to course.

Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation services and support should register with [Academic Accommodation Support \(AAS\)](#) and refer to [Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities Policy](#). Students are not required to provide their personal health information or seek accommodation directly from their professors, course instructors or teaching assistants as it pertains to academic accommodation for disabilities; for students with a mental health disability, a diagnosis statement is not required to register with AAS or to receive accommodations or support.

If academic accommodations for tests and exams are required, it is the student's responsibility to book **10 business days prior** to the date of writing any test or exam. Students who miss the deadline to book a test or an exam with accommodation must submit an exceptional booking request. For information on how to book a make-up test or exam, please visit the [Test Centre website](#).

Academic Considerations (Medical and Compassionate Reasons)

The [Undergraduate Academic Considerations and Appeals Policy](#) provides the process by which students may seek academic considerations for missed tests, assignments and/or final exam; however it is the students' responsibility to ensure the request is done in a timely manner.

Student Email Policy

All students are required to activate and maintain their Toronto Metropolitan online identity in order to regularly access Ryerson's Email, RAMSS, my.ryerson.ca portal and learning system, and other systems by which they will receive official University communications. Students are required to monitor and retrieve messages and information issued to them by the University via Toronto Metropolitan online systems on a frequent and consistent basis. Students have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. For more information, please refer to the [Student Email Policy](#).

Non-Academic Conduct

It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the [Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct](#) and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with generally accepted standards of behaviour, University regulations and policies.

Department Late Policy

The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies has a late assignment policy which specifies a minimum late penalty of 20% per calendar day. Please check the course outline for each course that you are enrolled in to see if there are any variances to this penalty.

Who to Talk To When You Have Problems or Questions

The following contacts are provided as a quick guide only and [the Toronto Metropolitan student guide](#) will have more information. As well, check out the [Toronto Metropolitan website](#) for a contact search function on the home page. The following contacts are organized by questions you might have.

If you want to contact one of your instructors or a potential instructor:

The link to Geography instructor phone numbers and email addresses are found in the **Who's Who** section of this handbook. All other faculty and staff members at Toronto Metropolitan University are found on the [Toronto Metropolitan website](#), which can be accessed easily online.

If you find yourself in academic difficulty with a single course:

The first person to talk to if you find yourself having difficulties in a **given course** is the course instructor. Many problems can be sorted out informally at this level. If for some reason you cannot speak with the instructor, then you should speak with the Undergraduate Program Director or the Undergraduate Program Administrator. You can also get advice on what to do from the Chair of the Department.

If you find yourself in academic difficulty with the whole term:

Usually, academic difficulties of such severity that they jeopardize a whole term are the result of health, financial or personal problems. The first person to talk to if you find yourself having difficulties in a **given semester** is the Undergraduate Program Director. The Undergraduate Program Director will be able to advise you on what to do to prevent failures in courses, or worse, being required to withdraw from the program. The Undergraduate Program Director

may refer you to the Chair of the department. **Remember that the first step towards fixing the problem is talking to someone about it. We can't help you if we don't know there is a problem, and the sooner we know, the more options we have to help you solve your problem.**

Who do I speak to if I require a Probationary Contract for the term:

If you are on Probation, you will require a probationary contract that is approved by your Program Director. A probationary contract must be completed within five (5) working days of the first day of the semester or your course registrations and course intentions may be cancelled. Just remember, the probationary contract is essentially designed to help you reach a clear academic standing, therefore it is always important to utilize the appropriate academic supports across the university.

If you find yourself in financial difficulties during the term:

A university education has become an expensive undertaking. For different types of financial assistance, you can speak with the [Student Financial Assistance](mailto:finaid@ryerson.ca) office at finaid@ryerson.ca, 416-979-5081, POD59.

If you find yourself in medical difficulties during the term:

Change in Academic Consideration Request Process:

As of Fall 2018, all FoA undergraduate students must submit their requests for academic consideration for health reasons online. The online system must also be used if you are requesting academic consideration for a Chang School course taken as part of your Faculty of Arts degree. A link to the online request form and instructions for submission are available here <https://prod.apps.ccs.ryerson.ca/senateapps/acadconform>.

You must submit the online request in advance of the missed work (e.g., test, assignment deadline, lab, etc.) When circumstances do not permit this, you must submit the request as soon as reasonably possible. Your instructor(s) will be notified automatically, and you will have an electronic record to verify when your requests were submitted and approved. The entire system is linked to RAMSS, which makes it faster and less prone to error.

Please note that **you are still required to submit a copy** of a completed Toronto Metropolitan University Student Health Certificate (or a letter from an appropriate regulated health practitioner) to your program office within 3 working days of the missed work.

If you find yourself in personal or emotional difficulties:

If you have personal or emotional difficulties in the semester, you should contact the Undergraduate Program Administrator or the Undergraduate Program Director. They will direct

you to the appropriate support services at Toronto Metropolitan. They will also see to it - if you wish - that your instructors are informed that you may need some academic accommodation. Again, depending on the nature of your situation, and its timing in the semester, you may have a range of options from dropping all or some of your courses to simply getting extensions from individual instructors. If you think that your situation is serious, you should also consider contacting the Centre for Student Development and Counselling, more information can be found on their website <https://www.ryerson.ca/healthandwellness/counselling/>. For emergencies, please contact the Centre for Student Development and Counselling (416 979 5195) or visit them in JOR07C immediately.

If you feel that you are being harassed:

If you feel that you are being harassed, you should immediately contact the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services <https://www.torontomu.ca/policies/policy-list/dhp-policy/>.

If you feel that you may have an undiagnosed learning disability:

If you suspect that a learning or physical disability may be responsible for your poor academic performance, you should visit the office at SLC-4 or contact them at 416-979-5290 or aaadmin@ryerson.ca or view the website of the [Academic Accommodations Support Office](#) for further information.

Other Services of use:

[Study Skills and Transition Support](#)

For professional resources to help you achieve your academic potential, including workshops, online seminars and online material for a variety of areas such as test anxiety and time management:
SLC 4th floor, (416) 598-5978, sls@ryerson.ca

[Enrollment Services and Student Records](#)

For issues concerning your student record, transcripts, change of address:
POD 150, (416) 979-5036, <https://www.torontomu.ca/servicehub/>

[Office of the Ombudsperson](#)

When you feel that all other legitimate avenues of aid at Toronto Metropolitan have failed and you still need help:
Oakham House 2nd floor (416) 979-5000 extension 1-557450, ombuds@ryerson.ca

Geographic Analysis Program

Your Next Four Years

All programs at Toronto Metropolitan University are comprised of three different types of courses: professional, professionally-related and liberal studies. To complete the Geographic Analysis program, students must take 25 required/professional courses, 10 professionally-related courses and 6 liberal studies courses for a total of 41 courses.

The professional courses in the Geographic Analysis program are structured so that students are introduced to basic concepts and methodologies in mandatory courses in the first two years, and then move to courses with more advanced conceptual and practical methodologies in upper years. The required courses include Energy, Earth and Ecosystems; Location, Location, Location; Geography and GIS; Analytical Techniques; Inferential Statistics; Cartographic Principles and Practice; and Geographic Information Science.

In third and fourth year, students choose from a number of electives depending on their desired specialty. Students undertake at least two out of the three upper level geography courses in consulting, research paper and/or professional geographer; and complete 350 hours of internship (preferably in the summer after their third year).

Student Learning Objectives

The program in Geographic Analysis seeks to promote specific skills, perspectives, and intellectual capabilities among its students. The learning process is, of course, a highly individual enterprise that is shaped by course selections, personal interests, prior experience, academic strengths and weaknesses, aspirations towards particular careers or further education, and a host of other factors. However, the Geographic Analysis program is constituted to reflect a particular approach to geographic education that is shared in one way or another by all its students. The learning objectives identified below reflect the view that students and faculty members share responsibilities and commitments. Faculty provide the learning opportunities, appropriate types of instruction and relevant and challenging academic substance; students provide the motivation, intellectual curiosity, commitment to learning, and work ethic. It is through both its faculty and its students, that the program creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation in the pursuit of intellectual development.

The Geographic Analysis program seeks to develop in its students' skills and intellectual capabilities in at least eight interdependent areas:

1. Research

Research, in its many forms, is central to the practice of Geographic Analysis. Students in the program will:

- develop broad proficiency in all aspects of research ranging from problem identification and definition through research design to analysis and the presentation of findings;
- gain extensive first-hand experience in the conduct of both independent and collaborative research; and
- become familiar with a variety of research paradigms, focusing on those that address the link between geographic research and societal need.

2. Analytical Skills

Students are expected to develop and demonstrate an analytical perspective. Specifically, they will gain:

- familiarity with data and information, with respect to types, sources, gathering, manipulation and presentation;
- a working knowledge of the most commonly used parametric and non-parametric statistical methods; and
- extensive experience in qualitative analysis including field work, text analysis, policy analysis, and other such procedures.

3. Creative/Critical Thinking

If the geographer is to contribute in meaningful ways to the betterment of society, creativity is an imperative. In the Geographic Analysis program, students will:

- develop creative approaches to problem identification, research design, data management, analytical procedures, and interpretation;
- develop strong integrative skills;
- bring a critical perspective to bear on conventionally accepted knowledge, models, theories, and applications; and
- cultivate an attitude of constructive questioning, intellectual curiosity, and self-directed learning.

4. Professional Standards

Most graduates of the Geographic Analysis program enter a career path directly upon graduation. To be adequately prepared for that step, students will:

- derive an understanding of workplace organization and customs;
- acquire a broad understanding of the array of endeavours in which professional geographers are engaged; and
- understand and respect ethical principles as they apply to the conduct of research and professional practice.

5. Communication Skills

Communication skills are fundamental to the conduct of research, the fulfilment of professional and societal responsibilities, and the satisfaction of personal goals. Students will become proficient in:

- written, oral and graphic modes of communication; and
- the interpretation of written, oral, map, graphic and numeric material.

6. Computer-Based Skills

Computer-based skills support and enhance virtually every aspect of applied geographic research, and are also important in and of themselves. Students in the Geographic Analysis program will gain:

- a working knowledge of computers and selected software, and their applications in geographic research;
- a working knowledge of GIS systems and applications; and
- familiarity with the use of information technology in its broad sense in both academic and professional contexts.

7. Societal Context

Geographic problems do not exist in a vacuum. Students in the Geographic Analysis program will develop:

- an awareness of the cultural, social, political, economic and intellectual contexts into which Geographic Analysis fits, and the ways in which the practice of geography affects those contexts;
- the ability to relate Geographic Analysis to real situations in a critical, creative and effective manner;

- an understanding of the local, regional, national and international dimensions of geographic problems and of societal issues in general; and
- the ability to place problems into a larger context, to draw upon relevant bodies of theory to select or create appropriate research designs, and to connect particular research outcomes to other areas of societal and professional relevance.

8. Disciplinary Context

Geographic Analysis is situated within a broader disciplinary framework. Students in the Geographic Analysis program will gain an appreciation of:

- the discipline of geography as a humanity, a natural science, and a social science;
- the major debates taking place within the discipline, and its possible futures;
- geography's interconnections with other disciplines; and
- Geographic Analysis's place within the geographic tradition.

Field Trips

The field trips are designed to allow students first-hand experience in applying their research skills at various levels. A variety of local day trips are organized for first-year students, including field visits to Central Toronto, the Don River, and the Niagara peninsula, to examine the urban, rural, agricultural, industrial, recreational and environmental aspects of Southern Ontario. The upper-year elective, Field Studies, is the most substantial of the program's trips. The trip is a course credit requiring intensive study of the urban, recreational, industrial and environmental aspects of the destination. In the past, field trips have taken place to Germany/Austria/Italy, Ireland/Northern Ireland, Vancouver Island, Jamaica, Paris, Puerto Rico, Florida, and Nevada/Arizona.

International Exchanges and Learning Abroad

(Contact person is [Jill Careless](#), Experiential Learning Coordinator)

International exchanges are an important option of the program, expanding the education horizons of those students who decide to go abroad for international experiences. We offer exchange programs in England and Germany. For more information on exchange programs, please refer to the Faculty of Arts, Student Experience Team [website](#) for details. Normally, third-year students participate in the international exchanges, but fourth-year students are also

considered. On average two to three students per year are selected to participate in the exchange programs. Interested students are interviewed by a committee and their abilities and level of interest and preparation are ascertained. Our criteria include not only academic ability, but also students' financial and support capabilities while overseas, and their ideas on their role as diplomats for the Department and for Toronto Metropolitan University. The Department also receives students from the foreign universities.

Practicum and Internship

(Contact person is [Sara Carmichael](#) at 416-979-5000 ext. 5038)

The internship has been part of the Geographic Analysis curriculum since the program started. It is a required course (GEO 771), for which students receive a credit in their seventh semester, after they have successfully fulfilled the requirement of 350 hours of program-related work during the preceding summer. As well, the course involves classes on resume writing and job search strategies in the 5th semester in order to prepare students for the task of finding and getting a paid internship position. The department attempts to gather as many job postings as possible for the students, but this is not the only possible avenue for internship. Students are strongly encouraged to find their own positions, but all positions must be vetted by the faculty member responsible for internship to ascertain their suitability for course credit. Virtually all students find internship work, and those few who struggle usually have been reluctant to pursue opportunities presented to them or to establish their own. The program expends considerable resources on the internship component because this work experience represents an important first step to a career as a professional geographer. Indeed, many of the internship positions evolve into full-time positions after graduation.

The Geography Labs

(Contact [Arts IT Help Desk](#) at 416-979-5000 ext. 552723)

The Department is proud of its geotechnology and statistics labs. We have two undergraduate labs, in POD346 and POD348, and a graduate lab in JOR602. POD348 is reserved for teaching, and POD346 is used as an open lab for undergraduate students. The graduate lab is reserved for research and course work by graduate students. All labs are controlled environments, available only during prescribed hours. **The labs are important to your education. Without them we cannot provide you with the necessary skills you need in today's competitive career markets. We expect you to look after the equipment, and pay attention to the rules listed below.**

Undergraduate Lab Rules

1. We reserve the right to **monitor the activity** on any workstation in the GEOGRAPHY domain.
2. Anyone found to have given his or her account name and password to anyone else may be **suspended** from the lab.
3. Anyone found attempting to hack into the server or the workstations will be suspended from the lab and may be **expelled** from the program.
4. Anyone found moving, tampering or damaging the workstations will be **suspended** from the lab.
5. Anyone found loading illegal software, data, or any other material onto the server or the workstations will be **suspended** from the lab.
6. Taking data and software is theft. Anyone found downloading software, data, or any other material from the server or the workstations may be expelled from the program, may be charged under the Criminal Code of Canada and will be **suspended** from the lab.
7. Anyone found using the lab for non-academic work may be asked to leave if the lab is full.
8. Failure to obey requests of faculty, the system administrator or the lab assistants on matters pertaining to lab operation will result in **suspension** from the lab.
9. The rights of all lab users must be respected. All Toronto Metropolitan University students, staff and faculty have the legal right to work and study free of harassment based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, or religion. There is to be no boisterous behavior, no excessive noise and absolutely no obscene or profane file names are to be used. Violation of this rule will result in **suspension** from the lab.
10. Do not bring food or beverages into the lab. Violation of this rule will result in your being asked to leave the lab and dispose of the offending items.

Environment and Urban Sustainability Program

Your Next Four Years

The Environment and Urban Sustainability program is comprised of three different types of courses: professional, professionally-related and liberal studies. To complete the Environment and Urban Sustainability program, students must take 23 professional/required courses, 11 professionally-related courses and 6 liberal studies courses for a total of 40 courses.

The professional courses in the Environment and Urban Sustainability program are structured so that students are introduced to basic concepts and methodologies in mandatory courses in the first two years, and then move to courses with more advanced conceptual and practical methodologies in upper years. The required courses include Environment and Sustainability, Sustaining the City's Environment, Reading Neighbourhoods Environments, Patterns of Demography and Environment, Research Statistics and the Geography of the Physical Environment.

In third and fourth year, students choose from a number of electives depending on their desired specialty. Upper students will be given an opportunity to focus their studies on environmental design, environmental management, environmental policy, community studies and natural sciences.

Student Learning Objectives

The Environment and Urban Sustainability program is designed to enable students to develop their understanding of the range of environmental issues through the examination of processes operating within the real world with an emphasis on the urban setting. At the same time, depending on their particular choice of courses, students can develop a degree of specialization and depth, so that they might, for example, choose to focus on development and analysis, communities and sustainability, natural science, environmental design, or environmental management. The program structure allows students to develop an awareness of the connections within the natural and social sciences and professional specialties. The Professionally Related courses which form a required element within the program ensure students a broad perspective in a wide variety of potential areas.

Students also will become attuned to the interconnection among interdisciplinary perspectives through required and optional EUS courses. The faculty members in the Department teach their areas of specialization through a diversity of perspectives, approaches and methodologies. This

will refine students' capabilities to gather, review, evaluate, and interpret information and data. The development of skills in the collection, analysis and interpretation of a variety of forms of data and information are a key component of the program.

Communication skills, both written and oral, are an integral part of the EUS program. With a variety of modes of evaluation, courses in the EUS program are designed to develop students' skills in discussion, oral presentation, and task achievement in both formal and informal settings. Students will produce written reports and essays in all courses and will be encouraged to participate actively in critical discussion. There will be a particular emphasis on developing students' skills in the presentation of information and of the results of analysis through written work meeting the standards and conventions of scientific and professional writing. Students will be asked to communicate many different kinds of information accurately and clearly, formulate insightful analyses, and produce persuasive arguments well supported by evidence.

The critical approaches that provide the foundation for research and teaching in environmental studies inherently demonstrate an understanding of the limits to knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge in both scholarly and professional circumstances. The underpinning of the majority of courses in the program is the scientific method and its epistemological foundations; while other courses, through the requirements in the Humanities, will promulgate an understanding of the historically and culturally contingent nature of knowledge. EUS students will be challenged to critically examine their own beliefs, interpretations, knowledge, and investigations, as well to develop the critical tools to appreciate and challenge the knowledge claims of others and conflicting modes of understanding.

Optional Practicum

An optional practicum placement is available to EUS program students, which will provide students with up to two periods of work experience. This practicum will allow students to experience career-related work that can greatly enhance and build on their university learning experience.

Students can apply through the Undergraduate Program Administrator for admission to the practicum placement at the beginning of their fourth and sixth semesters in the program. Enrolment in the internship placement may be limited with admission based on the student's grade point average. Practicum hours are scheduled with the host organization for the summer periods between a student's second and third years, and between their third and fourth years (i.e., May to August) offering no less than 200 hours of practicum experience. A practicum

placement is first and foremost an academic undertaking and students are expected to approach it as an academic commitment.

Although a practicum placement cannot be guaranteed, the Undergraduate Program Administrator and Undergraduate Program Director will provide assistance in locating suitable positions and counselling students in their search for suitable practicum hosts. The practicum placement includes an in-class component for all participating students that focuses on maximizing student learning with the host organization, cultivating a EUS identity, and charting a post-graduation career path. All practicum placements must be approved by the Undergraduate Program Director

Each student who is successful in obtaining a practicum placement will be enrolled in EUS 900 (completed between 4th and 5th or 6th and 7th term) or EUS 901 (typically completed between 6th and 7th term). Students can participate in one or both courses. A course grade of pass/fail will be recorded based on the determination of a program committee chaired by the Program Director.