

REGULATIONS FOR THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (PDipGIS)

(See also General Regulations)

Admission requirements

PDGIS 1. To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the Postgraduate Diploma in Geographic Information Systems, candidates

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations;
- (b) shall hold
 - (i) a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University; or
 - (ii) another qualification of equivalent standard from this University or from another University or comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
 - (iii) shall possess relevant working experience where applicable; and
- (c) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination, if required.

If admitted to the PDipGIS programme, candidates who have completed certificate programmes in GIS and related fields from another university or qualification of equivalent standard accepted for this purpose are eligible to apply for waiver of selected courses. The application for waiver requires the candidates to provide supporting documents (i.e., the description of the academic programme concerned, syllabi of relevant courses and respective grades awarded for those courses), and must be approved by the Programme Coordinator prior to commencement of the courses. Not more than two courses per student may be waived normally. Approved waiver(s) will not entail a reduction in the annual fee.

Qualifying examination

PDGIS 2.

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.
 - (b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.
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Award of postgraduate diploma

PDGIS 3. To be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Geographic Information Systems, candidates

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations; and
 - (b) shall complete the curriculum and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.
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Length of curriculum

PDGIS 4. The curriculum shall normally be completed within one academic year of part-time study with a minimum of 180 hours of prescribed work, which shall include examinations and coursework assessment in the manner as prescribed in the syllabuses. Candidates who have failed to complete the curriculum in accordance with this set of regulations within the maximum period of 24 consecutive months may be recommended for discontinuation of studies under the provisions of General Regulation G12.

Completion of curriculum

PDGIS 5. To complete the curriculum, candidates

- (a) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work; and
- (b) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of examination.

The examiners may also prescribe an oral examination, if required.

Examinations

PDGIS 6.

- (a) Candidates' performance during the study may be assessed through written assignments, tests, laboratory and practical work, and examinations as prescribed in the syllabuses.
 - (b) Examinations will be held at the end of the semester in which the courses are taken.
 - (c) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at the first attempt in not more than two courses, whether by means of written examinations or coursework assessment, in the year of study may be permitted to present themselves for re-examination in the failed course(s) with a specified period not less than 2 months nor more than 12 months after the publication of results.
 - (d) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners in three or more courses in the year of study may be required to repeat the curriculum and re-present themselves for the examinations or to discontinue their studies.
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Supplementary examination

PDGIS 7. Candidates who are unable because of illness to be present for any written examination may apply for permission to present themselves for a supplementary examination, which shall be held at a time to be determined by the Board of Examiners of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Any such application shall be made on the form prescribed within two weeks of the first day of absence from any examination. Candidates who fail to satisfy the examiners in the supplementary examination shall be considered as failure at the first attempt.

Discontinuation

PDGIS 8.

- (a) Candidates who are not permitted to present themselves for re-examination in any course(s) in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners shall be deemed to have failed and shall be recommended for discontinuation under the provisions of General Regulation G12.
 - (b) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at a second attempt in any course(s) may be required to discontinue their studies.
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Admission to the second year of the 2-year part-time Master of Geographic Information Systems (MGIS) programme

PDGIS 9.

- (a) Candidates who have satisfied the examiners in all the courses in the PDipGIS may be considered for admission to the second year of the part-time curriculum leading towards the award of the degree of Master of Geographic Information Systems (MGIS) provided that their application for conversion has been submitted to the Programme Co-ordinator before April 15 of the year.
- (b) Candidates who satisfy the examiners in all the remaining courses and the dissertation in their second year of study of the MGIS programme shall be awarded the degree of Master of Geographic Information Systems but shall not qualify for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Geographic Information Systems.

- (c) Candidates under these circumstances who, however, fail to satisfy the examiners and are therefore not eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Geographic Information Systems shall qualify for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Geographic Information Systems. Candidates who are allowed to take this exit path will not be re-admitted to the MGIS programme.
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Examination results

PDGIS 10. A pass list of candidates who have successfully completed all the postgraduate diploma requirements and are to be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Geographic Information Systems shall be published. Candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' diploma.

SYLLABUS FOR THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

COURSE OF STUDY

Coursework teaching conforms to the dates of semesters of the Faculty of Social Sciences. There are three sessions of two contact hours per week. Courses are assessed either by coursework, or a combination of coursework and examination. Examinations will normally be held at the end of the semester. Each candidate is required to take 3 core and 3 elective courses. The list of courses below is not final and is subject to changes and regular review.

CORE COURSES

Core courses are compulsory unless a student can demonstrate proven ability in the subjects. Students are required to satisfy the examiners in all 3 courses from this group.

GEOG7200. Fundamentals of geographic information systems

Established on the convergence of a multitude of disciplines and sciences (including land surveying, cartography, computer science, geography, photogrammetry, and remote sensing), the Geographic Information System is one that requires extra effort to master. This course gives an overview of the fundamental concepts and principles of the Geographic Information System, with highlights on its capabilities, applications, and trend of development. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7201. GIS data processing

Data quality determines the integrity of an application using GIS and related technologies. Data automation and processing have become a critical part in the study of Geographic Information Systems. Data model and structure, projection and reference, data preparation and conversion, resolution and accuracy, and macro programming are covered in the course. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7202. Analysing GIS data

Space is a principal consideration, either implicit or explicit, in many decision-making processes. A map is an efficient communication channel as it can convey much information beyond the language medium. The capability to relate information of diverse sources to their geographical location thus distinguishes GIS from other information technology. This course focuses on how to make use of the powerful spatial analytical and mapping functions of GIS in finding solutions to our problems. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

ELECTIVE COURSES

Each candidate is required to take any 3 courses from any of the following 2 groups of elective courses subject to the approval of the Programme Coordinator and availability of courses.

(A) ADVANCED GIS**GEOG7203. Programming for GIS**

Computer programs form an integral part of a Geographic Information System. The increasingly open architecture of contemporary GIS programs allows greater flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness in their use through customised applications. Acquiring programming proficiency therefore is essential to keep pace with the fledged development of the science in this Internet era. (100% coursework assessment)

GEOG7210. Photogrammetry and remote sensing (To be offered on alternate odd-year basis, i.e. 2007-08)

Remotely sensed data represent one form of reliable and economical source for timely information collection and update, especially in areas with as rigorous development as in Hong Kong. Data useful for land development planning, for instance, can be derived from aerial photographs and satellite images to facilitate further analysis. This course covers the techniques required for the capture, processing and analysis from aerial photos and satellite images by integrating photogrammetry and remote sensing with GIS technologies. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7211. Digital terrain modelling (To be offered on alternate even-year basis, i.e. 2008-09)

The incorporation of terrain analysis functions in GIS adds new perspectives to local engineering and planning professionals where slope safety has always been a major concern given the hilly terrain of the Territory. This course gives an overview of the Digital Terrain Modelling techniques with an emphasis on their applications in the engineering and planning fields. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7212. Cartographic presentation and visualisation (To be offered on alternate even-year basis, i.e. 2008-09)

Maps have been used for centuries to describe spatial patterns and portray association and correlation. Recent developments in digital spatial data handling have changed the environment where maps are used. Maps are no longer confined to the printed format. The lectures will cover fundamental concepts underlying different mapping/analytical techniques, their strengths, limitations, and application settings. The practicals will be devoted to imparting essential computer operating and map composition skills to visualize spatial data. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7213. Topics in database systems (To be offered on alternate even-year basis, i.e. 2008-09)

Non-spatial data (such as race or income) may be joined to geocoded files with matching attributes and displayed as regular maps. This is common in geographic information processing. Non-spatial data are stored in database systems (such as IBM DB2, IBM Informix, Microsoft SQL Server, and Oracle) for selective retrieval, query, and manipulation. This course introduces the database concept and focuses on middle management concerns of multi-user and integrated systems for GIS processing. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7214. Spatial and geostatistical data analysis (To be offered on alternate odd-year basis, i.e. 2007-08)

This course gives an introduction to the theory and practice of geostatistics in the context of environmental mapping and modelling with GIS. Geostatistical techniques bridge the gap between statistics and GIS. In environmental applications, geographic samples of soil, water or air are often interpolated to create continuous/statistical surfaces. The process of sampling and mapping of natural phenomena is often complicated by complex spatio-temporal variations. Geostatistics offer scientifically sound methods for describing such complex patterns and examining spatial variability based upon spatial statistical theories. They can assist in determining appropriate field sampling schemes and the optimal interpolation of sample data to areas or maps. Students will undertake a variety of hands-on assignments including data representation, spatial modelling, error assessment, and interpretation of results. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

(B) APPLICATIONS

GEOG7220. Environmental mapping and risk assessment (To be offered on alternate odd-year basis, i.e. 2007-08)

The integration of digital terrain modelling with spatial and statistical analysis makes GIS a powerful tool for environmental mapping and risk assessment. Landslide, for example, has been a widespread phenomenon in Hong Kong that hampers development into hilly regions prone to frequent landslide occurrences. The ability to map areas that are more risky than others is therefore important in hazard mitigation as well as land development planning. (50% coursework ; 50% examination)

GEOG7221. Internet GIS (To be offered on alternate even-year basis, i.e. 2008-09)

The advent of GIS based upon client/server systems for operation over the Internet and/or Intranet has created new needs and opportunities for geographic analysis and research. Spatial information exchange and distribution will be made much easier with the widespread use of the Internet. This course focuses on the essentials of developing client/server GIS applications on the Internet. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7222. GIS in transport planning and management (To be offered on alternate odd-year basis, i.e. 2007-08)

A theoretical framework and the various aspects (economic, social, ecological, and behavioural) of transportation systems are essential to put transportation issues in a societal context. This course introduces the spatial structures and developments of transport systems and the ways they are examined. It covers analytical tools and major techniques used in transportation field concerning spatial arrangements and impacts. (50% coursework; 50% examination)

GEOG7223. GIS project management (To be offered on alternate odd-year basis, i.e. 2007-08)

Managing a GIS project requires expertise in data organisation, systems configuration, institutional support, and skilled personnel. This course presents the above aspects in various project development phases. Topics include needs assessment, organizational and institutional issues, building staff competency, working with vendors and consultants, project management and scheduling tools, budgeting, and planning. An overview of typical GIS programs is presented, and each component (hardware/software, data conversion/creation, training, maintenance, standards, etc.) is discussed in terms of the manager's role in building a successful system. Both successful and failed case studies will be used to impart the essentials of managing a GIS project. (100% coursework assessment)

GEOG7225. GIS in health studies (To be offered on alternate even-year basis, i.e. 2008-09)

The idea of applying GIS techniques in health-related studies is no longer new. Indeed, GIS has been used for more than a decade in the western countries and a flooding of applications in the health care sector reflects its significance. This course discusses how a GIS is used to address and analyze pressing health problems from the geographical perspective. It covers such topics as theoretical and practical issues, simple disease mapping, disease pattern analysis, and spatial modeling techniques. The course will be conducted in a series of lectures and hands-on practices in a problem-based learning environment. (50% coursework; 50% examination)