

GEOGRAPHY - MASTER OF APPLIED GEOGRAPHY

Overview

The Master of Applied Geography (MAG) program at New Mexico State University's Department of Geography & Environmental Studies provides students with a flexible, interdisciplinary graduate education that prepares them for careers in both academic and professional settings. The program offers two pathways to completion:

Thesis Option (30 credits)

This option is designed for students interested in original research, this track requires coursework, the development of a master's thesis, and a thesis defense. Students work closely with faculty advisors and a thesis committee to produce a significant scholarly contribution to the field.

Non-Thesis (Residency) Option (30 credits)

This option is ideal for students pursuing applied, practice-based careers, this track replaces the thesis with a residency experience in an external organization, an applied residency report, and a final examination.

A Flexible and Interdisciplinary Approach

The MAG program is highly customizable, allowing students to tailor their studies to align with their academic interests and professional goals. Core coursework ensures a strong foundation in geographic theory, integrative research design, and advanced methodologies, while elective courses—drawn from geography and affiliated disciplines—enable students to develop specialized expertise in areas such as geographic information science and technology, environmental policy and planning, conservation and natural resource management, urban and regional planning, and emergency and disaster management.

Funding and Assistantships

Most MAG students receive financial support through teaching or research assistantships, which provide stipends and tuition coverage while offering valuable teaching and research experience. Additional funding opportunities are available through departmental scholarships, external grants, and professional partnerships.

Who Can Apply?

A background in geography is not required to enter the program. However, students without prior coursework in geography may be required to take preparatory courses to ensure success in graduate-level geography coursework. Prospective students are encouraged to consult with the Graduate Program Director to determine optimal pathways for meeting prerequisite requirements.

Career Pathways

Graduates of the MAG program secure careers in diverse professional and academic fields, including data and information management, cultural and natural resource management, environmental consulting, urban and regional planning, education and outreach, emergency management, and public health.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Master of Applied Geography, students will be able to:

1. Apply advanced geographic concepts and methods to assess human and/or environmental problems.
2. Propose ethical solutions to complex and dynamic human and/or environmental problems using critical thinking.
3. Conduct all stages of an independent research project, including conceptualization, planning, implementation, management, and communication through a research report.

More Information

See the Requirements tab for details on course and credit expectations for earning the Master of Applied Geography, and the Roadmap tab for a suggested course sequence.

1. Apply advanced geographic concepts and methods to assess human and/or environmental problems.