

REQUEST FOR CHANGE IN DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM

Program: Geography

Department/Division: Ph.D. in Geography

College: A & S Bulletin pp _____

Degree Title (Old): _____ Degree Title (New) _____

CIP Code: _____

Accrediting Agency (if applicable): _____

I. PROPOSED CHANGE(S) IN PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
1. Number of transfer credits allowed		
2. Residence requirement (minimum of one year before and after Qualifying Exams)		
3. Language(s) and/or skill(s) required	One	None
4. Provisions for monitoring progress and Termination criteria		
5. Total credit hours required (if applicable)		
6. Required courses (if applicable)		
7. Required distribution of courses within program (if applicable)		
8. Minor area or courses outside program required (if applicable)		
9. Distribution of courses levels required (400G-500/600-700)		
10. Qualifying examination requirements		

NOTE: To the extent that changes in 6 or 8 above involve additional courses to other programs, please include documentation from the program(s) pertaining to the availability of such courses.



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

April 20, 2004

TO: Graduate Council
FROM: Rich Schein, DGS Geography
RE: Foreign Language Drop Proposal

RS

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I must admit that I am more than a little puzzled that the Graduate Council recently denied our request to drop the language requirement as a blanket requirement for our PhD program, and I ask you to please reconsider your decision.

My puzzlement stems from several sources, and prompts a few notes:

- (1) It already is formalized by the Graduate School that the foreign language requirement is a department-by-department requirement, and not one mandated by the Graduate School itself. The Graduate School has apparently deferred the decision to formalize language training to the department. I note that the majority of PhD programs on campus do not have a language requirement. In our home college of Arts and Sciences, 9/17 PhD programs (<http://www.rgs.uky.edu/gs/bulletin/bull04Spring/DegreeRequirements.html>) listed do not have a blanket language requirement. If you take out the humanities (including language) disciplines, a move befitting Geography's status as a social science (human geography) and a physical science (physical geography), 8/11 listed PhD programs do not have a blanket language requirement.
- (2) The rejection of our proposal claimed that we did not provide a rationale for dropping the requirement. I draw your attention to the first 3+ lines of the 'Request for Change in Doctoral Degree Program' form, where we note that we want to drop the language requirement in order to compete with our benchmarks. I note that as one small part of the overall proposed changes, the language change requirement takes up proportionally more space in our rationale statement than any other single proposed change, and wonder why the same charge was not leveled toward other changes in our program.
- (3) In order to support that rationale I append a list of the blanket foreign language requirements for our Benchmarks: both Geography Departments in UK benchmark institutions, and the NRC top-twenty ranked Geography programs in the United States. I note that **our program is the only one in that entire list requiring a foreign language of all its students.**
- (4) Finally I note that dropping the language requirement as a *blanket requirement* (i.e. one size fits all) will not fail those of our students who obviously need a language as relevant to their professional development and research program. This is not a decision made by our program lightly. The Geography Department is fully aware that students working on ethnographic field methods in Mexico, for example, will need language training, and we have proposed to make that training (and that decision) the prerogative of the student and advisor in consultation with the DGS

Benchmark and Top Twenty Data
Foreign Language Requirement, Geography PhD programs

	<i>Language Requirement</i>
<i>Benchmarks</i>	
NC State	N/A
Ohio State	No
Pennsylvania State	No
Purdue	N/A
Texas A&M	No
U. of Arizona	No
UCLA	No
U. of Florida	No
U. of Georgia	No*
U. of Illinois	No
U. of Iowa	No
U. of Maryland	No
U. of Michigan	N/A
U. of Minnesota	No*
U. North Carolina	No
U. of Texas	No*
U. of Virginia	N/A
U. of Washington	No
U. of Wisconsin	No*

Top 20 Geography Departments (NRC Ranking)

Pennsylvania State	No
U. of Wisconsin	No*
U. of Minnesota	No*
UC Santa Barbara	No
Ohio State	No
UC Berkeley	No
Syracuse	No
UCLA	No
Clark	No
U. of Washington	No
SUNY Buffalo	No
U. of Colorado	Yes**
Rutgers	No
U. of Texas	No*
Arizona State	No
U. of Illinois	No
U. of Iowa	No
Louisiana State U.	No
University of Arizona	No
University of Kentucky	Yes

*Foreign Language may substitute for part/all of methods requirements

**Differentially enforced at department level depending upon student research needs

N/A: No Geography graduate program