

## **SoM Policies for the PhD Program:**

The OU Graduate College and School of Meteorology (SoM) provide various options for students to be admitted into the PhD program in Meteorology. These options and related policies as well as recommended timelines are summarized in this document. These policies and timelines provide guidance in addition to the rules of the OU Graduate College which are summarized in the OU Graduate Bulletin.

### **1. ADMISSION:**

The OU Graduate College expects each department to designate a Graduate Admissions Officer (GAO) who has the authority and responsibility for all admissions decisions. The SoM has decided that its Graduate Liaison will also serve as GAO. The SoM expects that, normally, the GAO will consult with the SoM Graduate Admissions Committee (GAC) before making admissions decisions. The GAC is formed each academic year at the first meeting of the SoM Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). The GAC is responsible for the evaluation of graduate admission applications and communication with the applicants regarding the status of their applications. The GAC is chaired by the GAO and consists of at least two **regular SOM faculty** members elected by the GSC. The staff person handling graduate admissions, normally the Coordinator for Academic Student Services, serves as a staff representative on the committee. **The Adjunct/Affiliate member of the GSC will be invited to serve as a non-voting Adjunct/Affiliate Representative on the GAC.**

The SoM GAC screens all graduate admission applications and ranks them into the following four categories:

1. Exceptional
2. Well Qualified
3. Conditionally Qualified
4. Not Qualified

The rankings will be obtained based on the following criteria:

- i) Suitability of their academic background for success in the program (e.g., degree in atmospheric sciences, earth sciences, physics, engineering, mathematics and related disciplines),
- ii) Academic record including overall GPA, GPA in their major and their grades in core classes critical to success in our program (e.g., dynamic and physical meteorology, math series from calculus to partial differential equations, physics, engineering classes, etc.),
- iii) reference letters,
- iv) GRE scores;
- v) other factors indicating success including publications, research, awards or employment experience;
- vi) TOEFL for foreign students.

The rankings will be provided to the faculty for review and will be utilized in the following manner:

- Students ranked as not qualified will receive early notices of their application being not accepted by the School.
- Recruiting efforts such as invitation to visiting student weekend and personal contact by the GAC and the School's staff will focus on those students in the top two categories.
- TA offers will be made based on merit beginning with the exceptional and strongest well qualified students who have research interests that match those of our faculty.
- Offers of GRAs will normally be made to those students that are exceptional or well qualified. Offers may be made to conditionally-qualified students upon GAC approval of an exception (e.g., the faculty member has been turned down by higher ranked students and is unable to find a student with interests in their general research area)

To be consistent with Graduate College practices, the TA and GRA offers will be made from the School and signed by the Director or Associate Director of the School. In the case of a GRA, the person who will support the student will also sign the offer letter to show their commitment to the student. If a GRA offer has been made to an applicant and another faculty member is interested in that applicant, the applicant will be asked to decline within a reasonable period of time all but one of these various offers. While we cannot ask a student to make a decision about coming to OU before the 15 April deadline, we can ask for a reasonably quick decision on selecting their preference for an OU adviser. In general, early career faculty will be given preference in the selection process.

**It is SoM policy that all accepted applicants without an MS degree are initially admitted into the SoM MS program. However, students can transfer into the PhD program before completing the MS degree. The policies for this Direct-Track PhD option are further described in the next section.**

## **2. DEFINITION OF SOM PHD TRACKS AND RELATED ADMISSION PRACTICES**

There are three different tracks by which students can obtain a PhD in Meteorology at OU:

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| <b>Direct Track:</b>      | Student is admitted into the PhD program before completing a SoM MS degree. However, students still have the option to receive a non-thesis MS degree from OU if they successfully pass the PhD General Examination, fulfill the MS core course requirements, and submit the Program of Graduate Work Form and Admission to Candidacy Form for the MS degree. |
| <b>SoM MS Track:</b>      | Student has completed the SoM MS degree and enters into the PhD program.  |
| <b>External MS Track:</b> | Student enters the PhD program after completing an MS degree outside the School of Meteorology.   |

Students without an MS degree that are interested in pursuing a PhD, should become familiar with the requirements for the Direct Track and SoM MS Track described in the following and are encouraged to discuss these options with the GAC during the application process and with their adviser.

**Direct-Track students** can be admitted into the PhD program typically during or shortly after their third semester before completing the SoM MS degree provided this degree change is approved by the GAO. The GAO approval is based on the following criteria:

1. Student completed at least 4 courses that fulfill the SoM Coursework Requirement for the PhD in Meteorology (described in section 3) and received a grade of A in at least 3 of these courses.
2. Student identified a research adviser that commits in writing to support the student as GRA or will serve as an adviser for students on graduate fellowships.
3. Student identified two additional members of the PhD committee.
4. Student developed a 5-10 page proposal for his/her PhD research which is positively reviewed by the research adviser and the 2 additional members of the PhD committee. As written documentation of this review, the PhD Direct-Track Application Form is filled out and signed by the three committee members. A copy of the signed form must be presented to the GAO. The GAO will retain the signed copy in the student's SoM folder.

**SoM MS-Track students** are admitted into the PhD program by the GAO after completing a SoM MS degree if the following criteria are fulfilled:

1. Student completed 4 courses that fulfill the SoM Coursework Requirement for the PhD in Meteorology (described in section 3) and received a grade of A in at least 3 of these courses.
2. Student identified a research adviser that commits to support the student as GRA or will serve as an adviser for students on graduate fellowships. In exceptional cases, such as an adviser who has funding pending with a strong likelihood of success or the student has an outstanding thesis and strong academic record, TA funding is also acceptable.
3. Student receives at least two very favorable written endorsements from his/her MS committee members. All MS committee members will be asked to submit a written recommendation.

**External MS-Track students** are admitted into the PhD program by the GAO if the following criteria are fulfilled:

1. Student's application for graduate study in the SoM is favorably reviewed by the SoM GAC. This includes that the application for admission is submitted to the Graduate College of the University of Oklahoma and forwarded to the SoM for approval.
2. Student identified a research adviser that commits to support the student as GRA or will serve as an adviser for students on graduate fellowships. In exceptional cases, such as an adviser who has funding pending or the student comes with an extremely strong background, TA funding is also acceptable.
3. Student has three or more letters of reference. At least two of these should be from his/her MS institution. All should indicate good potential for success as a PhD student.
4. MS record includes courses that fulfill the SoM Coursework Requirement for the PhD in Meteorology (described in section 3) and/or indicates that student will be able to successfully complete this coursework requirement in a timely manner.

### 3. **COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS:**

As a departmental requirement for the degree of PhD in Meteorology, the School of Meteorology (SoM) of the University of Oklahoma (OU) requires the successful completion of the SoM Coursework Requirement for the PhD in Meteorology (hereafter referred to as the “PhD Coursework Requirement”), which states that the student must receive a grade of B or better in at least 6 of the courses listed below, and receive a grade of A in at least 3 of those 6 courses.

1. 5103 Boundary Layer Meteorology
2. 5113 Advanced Atmospheric Dynamics I
3. 5223 Atmospheric Radiation
4. 5233 Cloud and Precipitation Physics
5. 5303 Objective Analysis and Data Assimilation
6. 5413 Advanced Synoptic Meteorology
7. 5673 Weather Radar Theory and Practice
8. 5503 Climate Dynamics or 5443 Tropical Meteorology
9. 5683 Weather Radar Applications or 6613 Weather Radar Polarimetry
10. 5344 Computational Fluid Dynamics I or 6323 Numerical Weather Prediction
11. 6223 Convective Clouds and Storms or 6413 Advanced Mesoscale Meteorology

A plan for the completion of the PhD Coursework Requirement must be indicated in the Required Coursework section of the student’s Report of the Advisory Conference, or its amendments.

A modification to the PhD Coursework Requirement for a student may be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee of the SoM (GSC). Approval is granted upon receiving a vote of approval by a simple majority of all elected GSC members who are regular faculty members of the SoM. The vote of approval will be conducted by a secret ballot box. The alternative plan must provide a breadth and rigor of knowledge in meteorology commensurate with the standard PhD Coursework Requirement. A petition for approval of the alternative plan must be brought to the GSC by the Chair of the student’s Advisory Conference Committee.

Additional elective course work will be listed on the student’s Report of the Advisory Conference. It is recommended that a student takes at least 4 elective courses that are not dissertation research hours in addition to the required 6 courses.