

10KV5330BALA: GEOGRAPHY & GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE, BALAS

In Workflow

1. U Program Review (eastuby@illinois.edu; mhazen@illinois.edu; bv4@illinois.edu; jswen@illinois.edu)
2. Gen Ed Review (menewell@illinois.edu)
3. 1872-G_GIS Head (jcidell@illinois.edu)
4. SESE Head (tomkin@illinois.edu)
5. KV Dean (las-catalog@illinois.edu)
6. University Librarian (clairest@illinois.edu; tteper@illinois.edu)
7. COTE Programs (suzannel@illinois.edu)
8. Provost (bsnewell@illinois.edu)
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10. Senate (jtempel@illinois.edu; bjlehman@illinois.edu)
11. U Senate Conf (kakuntz@illinois.edu)
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16. DMI (eastuby@illinois.edu; nnagy2@illinois.edu; bv4@illinois.edu; jswen@illinois.edu)

Approval Path

1. Mon, 18 May 2026 17:33:52 GMT
Emily Stuby (eastuby): Rollback to Initiator
2. Thu, 28 May 2026 18:18:50 GMT
Brianna Vargas-Gonzalez (bv4): Approved for U Program Review
3. Fri, 29 May 2026 15:52:01 GMT
Melissa Steinkoenig (menewell): Approved for Gen Ed Review
4. Fri, 29 May 2026 19:27:34 GMT
Julie Cidell (jcidell): Approved for 1872-G_GIS Head
5. Fri, 29 May 2026 19:52:52 GMT
Jonathan Tomkin (tomkin): Approved for SESE Head
6. Wed, 03 Jun 2026 13:51:50 GMT
Melissa Reedy (murray): Approved for KV Dean
7. Wed, 03 Jun 2026 14:10:48 GMT
Tom Teper (tteper): Approved for University Librarian
8. Wed, 03 Jun 2026 14:11:38 GMT
Suzanne Lee (suzannel): Approved for COTE Programs
9. Mon, 17 Aug 2026 14:26:32 GMT
Brooke Newell (bsnewell): Approved for Provost

History

1. Jan 16, 2019 by Deb Forgacs (dforgacs)
2. Apr 5, 2022 by Andrea Ray (aray)
3. Jun 26, 2025 by Brooke Newell (bsnewell)
4. Nov 26, 2025 by Matthew Cohn (mcohn)

Date Submitted: Wed, 20 May 2026 19:41:26 GMT

Viewing: 10KV5330BALA : Geography & Geographic Information Science, BALAS

Last approved: Wed, 26 Nov 2025 16:21:28 GMT

Last edit: Wed, 26 Aug 2026 15:22:06 GMT

Changes proposed by: Matthew Cohn

Proposal Type:

Major (ex. Special Education)

This proposal is for a:

Revision

Administration Details

Official Program Name

Geography & Geographic Information Science, BALAS

Sponsor College

Liberal Arts & Sciences

Sponsor Department

Geography & Geographic Information Science

Sponsor Name

Julie Cidell, Professor and Head

Sponsor Email

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College Contact

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If additional stakeholders other than the Sponsor and College Contacts listed above should be contacted if questions during the review process arise, please list them here.

Matthew Cohn (mcohn@illinois.edu)

Melissa Reedy, murray@illinois.edu (LAS Assistant Director Course & Cir Dvt)

Does this program have inter-departmental administration?

No

Catalog Term

Desired Effective Catalog Term

Fall 2027

Effective Catalog

2027-2028

Proposal Title

Proposal Title (either Establish/Revise/Eliminate the Degree Name in Program Name in the College of XXXX, i.e., Establish the Bachelor of Science in Entomology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, include the Graduate College for Grad Programs)

Revise the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Science in Geography & Geographic Information Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Are there other related proposals that should be considered simultaneously with this one? If yes, please list the program keys and/or titles. Consider Majors, Minors, Concentrations & Joint Programs in your department. Please know that this information is used administratively to move related proposals through workflow efficiently and together as needed. Format your response like the following "This BS proposal (key 567) is related to the Concentration A proposal (key 145)"

This proposal (key 440) is related to proposals to eliminate the BALAS concentrations in human geography (key 512) and general geography (key 510).

Program Justification

Provide a brief description, using a numbered item list, of the proposed changes to the program.

Provide a list of numbered items of what changed and why each change was necessary.

1. We've revised the Geography and Geographic Information Science, BALAS to be a stand alone major without concentrations. The concentration structure that separates the subdisciplines of geography into separate concentrations (human, general) is no longer reflective of current student needs and the interdisciplinarity of contemporary academic geography. Consolidation of the two BALAS concentrations into one flexible major without concentrations will make the degree requirements less confusing for students, less challenging to advise, and easier to maintain. This flexibility will promote student focus on strategic professional and research objectives rather than a narrow tactical focus on satisfaction of unnecessarily complex degree requirements.
2. Language throughout this proposal that referenced concentrations has been removed to reflect only the major. This included the Program Features being changed to reflect no transcriptable concentrations and the Program of Study that once linked out to the two concentrations.
3. The Program of Study table that once linked to the two concentrations has been replaced with a heading "Geography & GIS Coursework". The total number of hours has not changed, 25-27 hours. Students achieve this requirement by taking 200-400 level GGIS courses (8 hours at the 300-/400-level) in consultation with an academic advisor and course choice must be different than the core requirements, meaning no double counting.

General Justification—

Contemporary academic geography is broadly separated into physical geography (an earth science), human geography (a social science and/or humanities), and geographic information systems/science (a technology for working with geospatial data and performing scientific research). While faculty and students commonly have a primary identity in one of the subdisciplines, the boundaries between the subdisciplines are generally blurred in actual practice. Accordingly, the existing GGIS concentration structure that rigidly separates students into discrete concentration identities is unreflective of current student needs and works against the interdisciplinarity that is a core strength of contemporary academic geography.

While IBHE and UIUC do not appear to have a rigid set of requirements for distinguishing a BS from a BA, public facing materials at U of I and peer institutions note that BA degrees typically emphasize humanities, social sciences, and liberal arts, with a focus on qualitative critical thinking, communication, and analytical skills (e.g. <https://las.illinois.edu/news/blog/las-insider/2024-08-30/bachelors-vs-masters-degree-whats-difference>). In contrast to the specialized focus of the GGIS BSLAS on STEM courses from a selected upper division course list, the list-free BALAS broadens the possible range of upper division courses to include research specialties from our world-class human geography faculty: urban geography (GGIS 204, 384, 425), socioenvironmental issues (210, 254, 287, 350, 410, 438, 446, 465, 466, 482, 496), political geography (GGIS 221, 455), geographic theory (GGIS 471) and qualitative field work (GGIS 405). The absence of a fixed list of upper division coursework provides technically-adept students with the option to also take additional GISystems/Science coursework that can provide useful professional skills directly applicable to internships, entry-level jobs, and pursuit of further graduate study. Students have commonly chosen the BSLAS GIS concentration because of its clear professional identity, and broadening that identity with a concentration-free BALAS will retain that professional utility while giving students the freedom to explore a broader range of qualitative and quantitative geography courses in the spirit of the liberal arts tradition.

Instructional Resources

Will there be any reduction in other course offerings, programs or concentrations by your department as a result of this new program/proposed change?

No

Does this new program/proposed change result in the replacement of another program?

No

Does the program include other courses/subjects outside of the sponsoring department impacted by the creation/revision of this program?

No

Program Features

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Does this major have transcripted concentrations?

No Yes

What is the longest/maximum time to completion of this program?

4 years

What are the minimum Total Credit Hours required for this program?

120

CIP Code

450701 - Geography.

SOC Code(s) (Should be completed only for Certificates:)

Does this program prepare graduates for entry into a career or profession that is regulated by the State of Illinois?

No

Program of Study

Provide detailed information (course rubrics, numbers, and credit hours) of how a student could obtain 40 credit hours of upper-division coursework.

GGIS 371 or GGIS 379: 4 hours

300-/400- level GGIS courses chosen from list: 8 hours

LOTE level 3 and 4: 8-10 General Geography (Key 510) LOTE levels 3 and 4 (8-10 hours) GGIS 371 or GGIS 379 (4 hours) Concentration Requirement at the 300- or 400- level (6 hours) Remaining 20-22 hours

The remaining 18-20 can be fulfilled with free electives of which there are 36 in the sample sequence Human Geography (Key 512)

LOTE levels 3 and 4 (8-10 hours) GGIS 371 or GGIS 379 (4 hours) Concentration Requirement at the 300- or 400- level (6 hours)

Remaining 20-22 hours can be fulfilled by Free Electives of which there are 38 in the sample sequence. with free electives of which there are 36 in the sample sequence

Revised programs

GGIS_BALAS_SampleSequence_key440.docx

Statement for Programs of Study Catalog

Graduation Requirements

Minimum hours required for graduation: 120 hours

Minimum required major and supporting course work: A minimum of 35 credit hours of Geography & Geographic Information Science courses. Twelve (12) hours of 300- and 400-level courses in the major must be taken on this campus.

University Requirements

Minimum of 40 hours of upper-division coursework, generally at the 300 and 400 level. These hours can be drawn from all elements of the degree, including courses outside of GGIS. Students should consult their academic advisor for additional guidance in fulfilling this requirement. The university and residency requirements can be found in the Student Code (§ 3-801) and in the Academic Catalog.

General Education Requirements

Follows the campus General Education (Gen Ed) requirements (<https://courses.illinois.edu/gened/DEFAULT/DEFAULT/>). Some Gen Ed requirements may be met by courses required and/or electives in the program.

Code	Title	Hours
General Education Requirements		
Composition I		4-6
Advanced Composition		3
Humanities & the Arts (6 hours)		6
Natural Sciences & Technology (6 hours)		6
Social & Behavioral Sciences (6 hours)		6
fulfilled by GGIS 101 or GGIS 104 or GGIS 106 or GGIS 210 or GGIS 221 or GGIS 254 and any other course approved as Social & Behavioral Sciences		
Cultural Studies: Non-Western Cultures (1 course)		3
Cultural Studies: US Minority Cultures (1 course)		3
Cultural Studies: Western/Comparative Cultures (1 course)		3
Quantitative Reasoning (2 courses, at least one course must be Quantitative Reasoning I)		6-10
Language Requirement (Completion of the fourth semester or equivalent of a language other than English, or completion of the third semester in two different languages other than English is required)		0-20
Code	Title	Hours
Orientation and Professional Development		
LAS 101	Design Your First Year Experience	1
OR		
LAS 100 & LAS 101	Success in LAS for International Students and Design Your First Year Experience	3

OR

LAS 102	Transfer Advantage	1
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Major Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Geography & GIS Core Requirements		10-12
Physical Geography Core Course (Select one):		
ATMS/GGIS 100	Introduction to Meteorology	3
GGIS 103	Earth's Physical Systems	4
GGIS 220	Landscapes, Ecosystems and Environmental Change	3
GGIS 222	Big Rivers of the World	3
Human Geography Core Course (Select one):		
GGIS 101	Global Development & Environment	3
GGIS 104	Social and Cultural Geography	4
GGIS 106	Geographies of Globalization	3
GGIS 210	Social & Environmental Issues	3
GGIS 221	Geographies of Global Conflict	3
GGIS 254	People, Places, and Environments of the US	3
GIS Core Course (Select one):		
GGIS 371	Spatial Analysis	4
GGIS 379	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems	4

Code	Title	Hours
Students must choose one of the following concentrations:		

General Geography (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/undergraduate/las/geography-geographic-information-science-balas/general-geography/>)

Human Geography (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/undergraduate/las/geography-geographic-information-science-balas/human-geography/>)

Geography & GIS Coursework	25-27
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200 to 400 level Geography & GIS Courses (at least 8 hours must be at the 300 or 400 level) chosen in consultation with an academic advisor

Course choice must be different than Core requirements chosen in the major.

Corresponding Degree

BALAS Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences

Program Regulation and Assessment

Plan to Assess and Improve Student Learning

Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(b)(1)(D) Provision is made for guidance and counseling of students, evaluations of student performance, continuous monitoring of progress of students toward their degree objectives and appropriate academic record keeping.

Are the learning outcomes for the program listed in the Academic Catalog?

Yes

Student Learning Outcomes

At Geographic Understanding GGIS students will understand the completion interconnectedness of this program, GGIS students will: places and scales in human environmental systems, including the sustainability of those systems.

1. Spatial Patterns and Processes GGIS students will be able to analyze spatial patterns, distributions, processes, and connections within and among different human environmental systems, using qualitative, quantitative, computational, and/or spatial methods of research appropriate to their level of training and their field of geographic inquiry. have Problem Solving and Communication GGIS students will be able to formulate and conduct geographic understanding, understanding analyses and communicate the interconnectedness of places and scales results in human environmental systems, including the sustainability of those systems. verbal, written, and visual form.

2. Spatial Patterns and Processes GGIS students will be able to analyze spatial patterns, distributions, processes, and connections within and among different human environmental systems, using qualitative, quantitative, computational, and/or spatial methods of research appropriate to their level of training and their field of geographic inquiry.

3. have problem-solving and communication skills to formulate and conduct geographic analyses and communicate the results in verbal, written, and visual form.

Did you make any revisions to the learning outcomes you copied and pasted from the current academic catalog?

Yes No

Program Description and Requirements Attach Documents

Delivery Method

This program is available:

On Campus - Students are required to be on campus, they may take some online courses.

Admission Requirements

Is this revision a change to the admission status of the program?

No

Provide a brief narrative description of the admission requirements for this program. Where relevant, include information about licensure requirements, student background checks, GRE and TOEFL scores, and admission requirements for transfer students.

Enrollment

Describe how this revision or phase down/elimination will impact enrollment and degrees awarded. If this is an elimination/phase down proposal include the plans for the students left in the program.

This revision is not expected to impact enrollments.

What is the matriculation term for this program?

Fall ONLY

Budget

Are there budgetary implications for this revision?

No

Will the program or revision require staffing (faculty, advisors, etc.) beyond what is currently available?

No

Additional Budget Information

This revision is not expected to impact department budgets.

Attach File(s)

Financial Resources

What tuition rate do you expect to charge for this program? e.g, Undergraduate Base Tuition, or Engineering Differential, or Social Work Online (no dollar amounts necessary)

Undergrad Base

Are you seeking a change in the tuition rate or differential for this program?

No

Attach letters and self-supporting documents as applicable

Program Support

Provide a brief description of the support for this program, including the financial, faculty, space, advisors/staff. Discuss plans to acquire any additional support that will be needed. If new or additional facilities or significant improvements to already existing facilities is needed, describe the Facility Need, Year 1 and 5 cost, and any other applicable notes.

No additional physical space or faculty/staff resources will be needed with this revision. In fact, GGIS recently expanded our advising team and this revision will simplify workflow for them and for our students as they progress through the major.

Attach any supporting documents as applicable.

Library Resources

Describe your proposal's impact on the University Library's resources, collections, and services. If necessary please consult with the appropriate disciplinary specialist within the University Library.

The proposal team consulted with Jessica Hagman and, based upon their input, determined that the Library's resources, collections, and services are sufficient to meet the needs of the program outlined in this proposal.

EP Documentation

EP Control Number

EP.27.016

Attach Rollback/Approval Notices

Non-EP Documentation

U Program Review Comments

Rollback Documentation and Attachment

DMI Documentation

Attach Final Approval Notices

Banner/Codebook Name

BALAS: Geography & GIS - UIUC

Program Code:

10KV5330BALA

Minor Code

Conc Code

Degree Code

BALAS

Major Code

5330

Senate Approval Date

Senate Conference Approval Date

BOT Approval Date

IBHE Approval Date

HLC Approval Date

DOE Approval Date

n/a

Effective Date:

Program Reviewer Comments

Emily Stuby (eastuby) (Mon, 18 May 2026 17:33:52 GMT): Rollback: College request

Key: 440