



Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Standards & Criteria

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Program Eligibility

Programs applying for United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF) accreditation must demonstrate in their Self-Study that they are eligible to be accredited. Eligibility determination is distinct from evaluation against the USGIF accreditation standards for purposes of accreditation determination. Eligible programs must:

1. Be accredited by a recognized regional, national, or international agency.

Eligible programs demonstrate their affiliation with an accredited institution of higher education in order to further establish the legacy of the institution and demonstrate excellence.

2. Have an established mission consistent with the USGIF mission, as appropriate to the institution's core mission, to facilitate growth and innovation in Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT).

Eligible programs define their mission to communicate to stakeholders their role in supporting GEOINT. Missions will vary from program to program, as appropriate, given varying stakeholder requirements.

3. Have an enduring and ongoing commitment to preparing learners for work in GEOINT via excellence in teaching, research, and professional activities.

Eligible programs have a track record consistent with excellence in preparing students for work in the GEOINT profession and are able to translate their track record into plans for future success.

4. Adopt a GEOINT-focus.

While GEOINT is inherently multi-disciplinary and builds upon existing professions (e.g., GIS, imagery analysis, information technology), eligible programs emphasize the unique contributions of GEOINT to informing and improving leadership decision-making. Eligible programs support learner-centric applications of GEOINT to specific mission areas and/or specialty areas.

5. Deliver a course of study consistent with the program an institution is looking to accredit.

Eligible programs deliver content congruent with the course of study required for the given program (i.e., certificate, degree) and award students with official documentation signifying their completion of program.

6. Maintain at least two full-time faculty members at all times.

Eligible programs maintain two full-time faculty members to serve as a Point of Contact (POC) to USGIF and as a Deputy.

Programs that are eligible must demonstrate compliance and alignment with the Standards described in this document. Programs that do not demonstrate alignment with these eligibility criteria are not eligible for USGIF accreditation. After receiving the accreditation application package, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and one SME will revise for program eligibility before sending the application to the external reviewers. The Site Visit Report will also contribute to the decision to return the application if it fails to meet at least 4 out of 6 of the eligibility criteria listed above.

Interpretation of Criteria

While USGIF recognizes and supports the prerogative of institutions to use and adopt the terminology of their choice, it is necessary for the USGIF accreditation panel to have a consistent understanding of terminology. With that purpose in mind, the USGIF will use the following basic definitions:

- **Program Educational Goals** – Broad statements that describe the educational accomplishments that the program is preparing graduates to achieve.
- **Program Outcomes** – Narrow statements that describe expectations regarding student learning and performance by time of graduation, relating to skills, knowledge, and behaviors students acquire through the program.
- **Assessment** – One or more processes that identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the achievement of program outcomes and program educational objectives.

Considerable latitude in the choice and arrangement of subject matter in the curriculum is encouraged. The general principles outlined in the criteria will be evaluated by analyzing each particular curriculum.

Standards

Standard 1: Students

The program must articulate program policies to students, any changes in policies or procedures that affect students' progress toward completion of the program, and the program's accreditation status.

Requirements:

- 1.1** Policies for GEOINT students are congruent with those established by the institution and are publicly accessible, non-discriminatory, and consistently applied.

If there are differences between GEOINT student policies and those of the applying institution (e.g., rigor, credit hours, graduation requirements), the program must provide justification with regards to the program's educational objectives and student learning.

- 1.2** Public information provided by the program must be accurate, clear, consistent, and accessible to all.
- 1.3** Students' educational records are in compliance with the policies of the governing institution as well as state and federal guidelines.
- 1.4** The program must publicly and accurately specify their accreditation status and USGIF's contact information.
- 1.5** Any substantive changes in policies, procedures, and program information that may affect students are clearly and consistently communicated in a timely manner.

Standard 2: Program Educational Objectives

The program demonstrates an alignment of the program's educational objectives with those of USGIF.

Requirements:

- 2.1** Program mission and objectives align with the core values, mission, and standards set by USGIF.
- 2.2** Publicly documented information regarding the program's educational objectives alignment with USGIF's GEOINT Essential Body of Knowledge (EBK). (see Standard 3.4).
- 2.3** Procedures guiding a formative and summative evaluation of the program's achievement of educational objectives.

Standard 3: Curriculum

The program's curriculum must support the program's and institution's educational objectives. The curriculum must reflect to a certain degree the foundational GEOINT competencies and topics covered in USGIF's GEOINT Essential Body of Knowledge (EBK). The EBK is a document revised and updated on an annual basis that serves as a curriculum framework for GEOINT students and, later on, GEOINT professionals.

Requirements:

- 3.1** A procedure in place is used to organize the curriculum, guide the delivery of instruction, and direct learning activities.
- 3.2** Curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure integrity, rigor, and relevance to the GEOINT EBK.
- 3.3** Curriculum is designed so that courses collectively cover a preponderance of the GEOINT EBK and graduates, at the completion of the program, can:
 - 3.3.1** Apply knowledge of remote sensing, geographic information science & technology, computer science, and analytic processes;
 - 3.3.2** Find and interpret data;
 - 3.3.3** Function in a collaborative environment;
 - 3.3.4** Communicate with others effectively, both in writing and orally; and
 - 3.3.5** Use the techniques, skills, and tools necessary to solve GEOINT problems.
- 3.4** Included in the program's curriculum is:
 - 3.4.1** An Intro to GEOINT course/module/MOOC/micro-credential;
 - 3.4.2** A GEOINT Capstone experience that (1) brings together the EBK components in an applied exercise and (2) includes a presentation of the work the student completed; and
 - 3.4.3** A suitable array of prerequisites to establish a broad multidisciplinary foundation using the course matrix.
- 3.5** Curriculum facilitates student understanding and application of GEOINT competencies regardless of particular software, tools, technologies, or approaches. Programs acknowledge that the practice of GEOINT is software-agnostic.
- 3.6** *(For Certificate Programs Only)* The total number of credit hours required to complete undergraduate certificate programs is at least 18 total credit hours (15 credit hours and a minimum 3 Capstone credit hours). The total number of credit hours required to complete graduate certificate programs at least 15 total credit hours (12 credit hours and a minimum 3 Capstone credit hours).

Students in either program, undergraduate or graduate, must complete the program with a cumulative B average in all core and elective program courses, and receive no grade lower than a C on any single program course.

Note: Credit hours are based on the assumption that 3 credit hours equates to 40 hours of classroom instruction. Institutions not following this assumption need to demonstrate students are receiving at least 40 hours of classroom instruction per course. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis for schools with specific credit hour requirements mandated by the institution or other accrediting bodies.

- 3.7** (Foreign applicants only) A United States equivalence report, demonstrating course-by-course credit and grade equivalence, is submitted with applicant's initial application.

Standard 4: Faculty

The faculty supporting the program, collectively, must have the expertise and educational background in order to cover the breadth and depth of competencies specified in the GEOINT EBK. The program must have a sufficient number of faculty to meet all the demands of the curriculum and meet students' requirements.

Requirements:

- 4.1** Full-time and Part-time faculty hold educational qualifications (e.g., relevant Ph.D./Master's degree, a certification from USGIF or other GEOINT authority) and experience to ensure the proper guidance of the program, its evaluation, and its development.
- 4.2** A sufficient number of faculty, as determined by student enrollment, must be maintained to accommodate adequate levels of student-faculty interaction (e.g., advising and classroom teaching) as well as non-student interactions (e.g., collegiate service activities and professional development).
- 4.3** Faculty performance is regularly evaluated in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures.

Standard 5: Facilities

The facilities supporting the program must be adequate and appropriate to fulfill the necessary student-faculty interactions (e.g., advising, classroom teaching) and accomplish the program's educational objectives.

Requirements:

- 5.1** Adequate classrooms, technologies (including adequate e-learning platforms where appropriate), and associated equipment are maintained to ensure accomplishment of the program's educational objectives and provide an atmosphere conducive for learning.
- 5.2** Students are provided appropriate guidance on how to use the available tools, equipment, computing resources, and laboratories available to the program.
- 5.3** Computing and information infrastructures are in place to support the scholarly activities of students and faculty.
- 5.4** Faculty are provided space offering sufficient privacy to permit accomplishment of student responsibilities (e.g., advising).

Standard 6: Institutional Support and Monetary Resources

The program must have sufficient support from its institution to ensure that it can provide the necessary facilities, support staff (e.g., information technology, administrative, etc.), and institutional services to maintain the program. The program must also be able to demonstrate it has the monetary resources to fulfill its educational objectives. Examples may include, but not limited to: budget assigned to faculty on a semester or yearly basis for professional development, professional affiliations, student support to attend/present at geospatial and ideally GEOINT conferences, examples of investments in software/hardware updates, new labs, subscriptions to publications, number of lab support staff/ paid student assistants to manage the labs or other geospatial projects, investments in curriculum development as faculty grants or course releases, etc.

Requirements:

- 6.1** Monetary resources and institutional incentives must be sufficient to:
 - 6.1.1** Attract, retain, and provide for continued professional development of a well-qualified faculty;
 - 6.1.2** Support the stability of the program; and
 - 6.1.3** Meet the program's educational objectives.
- 6.2** Faculty, support personnel, and institutional services must be sufficient to acquire, maintain, and operate facilities and equipment appropriate for the program.

Standard 7: Recruiting/Retention

The program has plans and goals in place to support the recruitment and retention of high-quality students with diverse backgrounds who are committed to pursuing a career in the GEOINT or GEOINT related field.

Requirements:

- 7.1** Policies and procedures for student recruitment and admission of qualified individuals who have the educational prerequisites, the interest, and the motivation to pursue careers in the GEOINT or GEOINT related field are documented.
- 7.2** Expectations for admission to, continuation in, and completion of the program are publicly documented.
- 7.3** Procedures for ensuring students' continued capability to meet the demands of the curriculum and their commitment to entering and practicing the GEOINT profession are in place.
- 7.4** Faculty perform regular advising of GEOINT students regarding curriculum progression, the student's future in the GEOINT field, and how to pursue a career in the GEOINT field or other fields using GEOINT competencies.
- 7.5** Procedures for documenting GEOINT students' progress toward graduation requirements is established and enforced.
- 7.6** Demonstrates efforts made to recruit a diverse student body (e.g., older students, working professionals, students from other majors).
- 7.7** Demonstrates healthy student enrollment and retention rates appropriate to the size of the program and institution.

Standard 8: Partnering with Industry/Professionals

The program will demonstrate a commitment to exposing students to the broad range of GEOINT or GEOINT related professions through engagement with employers and industry.

Requirements:

- 8.1** Demonstrates efforts in establishing relationships with potential employers to foster opportunities for student internships, student training opportunities, post-graduate employment, coordinated research initiatives, and/or project-based work for classes.
- 8.2** Demonstrates participation with at least one professional GEOINT organization in two or more ways:
 - 8.2.1** Faculty participation at GEOINT conferences;
 - 8.2.2** Student attendance or participation at GEOINT conferences;
 - 8.2.3** Service activities to or for a professional organization; and/or,
 - 8.2.4** Hosting an educational, training, or outreach program with an external professional organization.

Standard 9: Research

The program will facilitate the progression of the GEOINT field, establish new knowledge areas, describe the scope of the profession to students, and teach students how to interpret and apply their knowledge to practice. The program will accomplish these by faculty impressing on students the importance of how scholarly activities contribute to the development of a body of knowledge relevant to the GEOINT profession.

Requirements:

- 9.1** Faculty is actively engaged in GEOINT-related research and supported in these efforts by the applying/accredited institution.
- 9.2** Opportunities for student participation in research and other scholarly activities mentored by faculty are provided.

Standard 10: Continuous Improvement

The program will demonstrate its dedication to continuously evaluate and improve its practices to ensure students are being afforded the best education, and the program is effectively accomplishing the educational objectives it sets forth.

The program must also demonstrate the commitment to evaluating their educational objectives and improving the effectiveness of the overall program.

Requirements:

- 10.1** An Annual Program Review Report is submitted every year to USGIF (email to accreditation@usgif.org) by August 31st the latest . The Report includes any changes that occurred since the initial accreditation, reaccreditation, or the most recent Annual Program Review Report. The reports must include the following information:
 - 10.1.1** Substantive changes that were made based on previous USGIF feedback,
 - 10.1.2** Substantive changes that were made based on the program's own decisions,
 - 10.1.3** Achievement of program educational objectives,
 - 10.1.4** Goals moving into the next academic year, and
 - 10.1.5** Any other information USGIF deems necessary to evaluate the program (Appendix B).
- 10.2** Policies describing how the Annual Program Review Report will be used to improve the effectiveness of the program are documented.
- 10.3** Students are encouraged to provide their perspectives on the program's success through the participation in an end-of-program evaluation (e.g., student program evaluations, student faculty evaluations).
- 10.4** Agrees to participate in USGIF data collection for monitoring the health and makeup of the GEOINT field. The data collected will be used to create public reports for all GEOINT professionals, GEOINT programs, and GEOINT students. No personally identifiable information will be shared about students (e.g., student name, ID, social security, home address) other than information they agree to share voluntarily and/or aggregated data.