



# Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Policies & Procedures

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## Preamble

### USGIF Mission for Accreditation

The United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF) mission is to promote the geospatial intelligence tradecraft, and to develop a stronger community of interest between government, industry, academia, professional organizations, and individuals who share a mission focused around the development and application of geospatial intelligence to address national security objectives. Toward this end, USGIF seeks to accomplish this mission using a variety of tactics including the accreditation of educational programs to promote the continuous growth of the Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT) profession through education, professional development, and practice.

USGIF accreditation is a voluntary, rigorous self-review and peer evaluation process aimed at institutions committed to upholding the *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Standards & Criteria*. USGIF aims to support lifelong learning and professional development in the competencies associated with GEOINT, amplify GEOINT's impact in education, industry and government, foster GEOINT exchanges and engagement, and help accelerate GEOINT teaching, research, and innovation.

### Purpose of the Accreditation Program

USGIF created the Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program to accomplish three (3) major purposes:

1. To recognize GEOINT programs that have been found to meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality,
2. To assist accredited programs improve their GEOINT curricula to keep pace with a changing GEOINT professional environment, and
3. To ensure programs are preparing students with a strong skill and knowledge base that can be applied across industry to further establish the GEOINT profession.

USGIF accredits GEOINT certificate programs and GEOINT degrees.

GEOINT certificate programs may be offered as a degree enhancement or as an independent certificate (i.e., stand-alone certificate). GEOINT certificates allow students to obtain expertise in the field as an added value to their major (undergraduate or graduate level) without investing the time needed to earn a college graduate degree (Master's, Ph.D.). These certificates provide students with the knowledge and skills consistent with the GEOINT Essential Body of Knowledge (EBK), as well as prepares them for the professional world through applied opportunities to conduct analysis and perform synthesis and evaluation. These certificate programs are designed so students who complete the program, regardless of major, may receive a certificate of achievement from USGIF.

GEOINT degree programs may be offered by a University Center, one School/Department, across several Schools/Departments, or as part of a Consortium of institutions that seek to equip students with the skills, competencies, and knowledge necessary to work in the GEOINT field.

Degree programs differ from certificate programs in that degree programs require more credit hours to complete the program, there are general education courses intermixed with GEOINT focused courses, and students are required to understand the material at a higher complexity and specificity. These degree programs are geared toward any individual interested in GEOINT careers who are willing to invest the time, effort, and money to advance their skills and knowledge to apply intelligence to help save lives, improve government, and assist businesses.

### Benefits of Accreditation

Accredited programs demonstrate:

- To the GEOINT profession, a commitment to help further define and expand what GEOINT means;
- To the GEOINT community, that they are providing students with a thorough and rigorous GEOINT focused education;
- To employers, that graduates from these programs are highly qualified and on the path to becoming a successful entry-level GEOINT professional;
- To accredited schools' administration, that the program is committed to continuously evolving and providing students with a variety of demanding and innovative courses;
- To students, that they are enrolled in a program that is recognized by premier professional organizations and employers.

### What is Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT)?

Several definitions have emerged since the creation in 2003 of the term "GEOINT." These varied definitions demonstrate the complexity of the subject:

Darryl Murdock and Robert M. Clark- *The Five Disciplines of Intelligence Collection* (2015)  
*Geospatial Intelligence, or GEOINT, is the professional practice of integrating and interpreting all forms of geospatial data to create historical and anticipatory intelligence products used for planning or that answer questions posed by decision makers.*

TODD BACASTOW & DENNIS BELLAFIORE – AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE JOURNAL (2009) & NGA PATHFINDER (2016)

*Geospatial intelligence is actionable knowledge, a process, and a profession. It is the ability to describe, understand, and interpret so as to anticipate the human impact of an event or action within a spatiotemporal environment. It is also the ability to identify, collect, store, and manipulate data to create geospatial knowledge through critical thinking, geospatial reasoning, and analytical techniques. Finally, it is the ability to present knowledge in a way that is appropriate to the decision-making environment. Bacastow (2016) further reduced GEOINT to the principles of: (1) seeks knowledge to achieve a decision advantage, (2) reveals how human behavior is constrained by the physical landscape, time, and human perceptions of the Earth, and (3) discovering relationships through space and time.*

KEITH MASBACK – GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE FORUM (2010)

*Ask 10 people to define “geospatial intelligence,” and you are likely to get 10 different answers. Words you might hear would include imagery, photogrammetry, geography, cartography, geographic information systems, analysis and remote sensing – and the list could go on longer. [The] legal definition paints with a broad brushstroke an idea of the width and depth of GEOINT. Geospatial Intelligence can’t be defined by a particular program or product.*

JAMES R CLAPPER JR – PATHFINDER (2004)

*GEOINT is about more than pictures. GEOINT makes possible in-depth assessments and judgments based on the information that is gleaned from visual depictions. In short, GEOINT is more than imagery, maps, charts and digital displays showing where the bad guys are. GEOINT at its best is the analysis that results from the blending of all of the above into a dynamic, composite view of features or activities – natural or manmade – on Earth.*

GEOINT as a discipline has broad, global applicability to include Commercial, Academia, U.S. Defense, Intelligence and Homeland Security. GEOINT practitioners foster the cross-pollination of knowledge and competencies among many sectors. A global revolution in commercial technologies, location-based services, and commercial imagery has created the opportunity to apply GEOINT in many fields. Domains such as public safety, disaster management, public health, agriculture, and business are leveraging geospatial information to provide an advantage to decision-makers, thereby expanding the field of GEOINT (State of GEOINT Report 2015).

#### History of USGIF and its Accreditation Program

The concept of USGIF was born during an industry-led gathering of GEOINT stakeholders in October 2003. Called GEO-INTEL, this initial event was planned by a group that would become the founding members and leadership of USGIF. USGIF was then established in January 2004 under the leadership of Stu K. Shea. An educational 503 (c) nonprofit dedicated to advancing the GEOINT tradecraft, USGIF has become an important thread in the GEOINT Community. It made GEOINT the only intelligence discipline with a dedicated foundation or association. Over the years, USGIF has reached throughout federal, state, and local government, as well as to industry and academia, to help the discipline flourish. The Foundation has managed to successfully create a true community on top of its three pillars—build the community, advance the tradecraft, and accelerate innovation.

Demand for qualified GEOINT personnel has been outpacing the supply of suitably educated personnel for many years. To meet this growing demand USGIF developed the Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program, thus assuring students entering the field possess the geospatial capabilities and providing a strong foundation for a GEOINT career pathway. Three universities, George Mason University, Penn State University and University of Missouri received full accreditation for the GEOINT certificates in 2009 followed by others over the next years. The first international university, NOVA IMS in Portugal, received accreditation in 2017, marking a significant milestone in USGIF’s outreach and vision going forward.

USGIF took a leadership role and gathered GEOINT subject matter experts (SMEs) from a wide variety of markets to create industry’s answers to government-specific credentials through the

development of a transparent, transportable and trans-industry dynamic and rapidly expanding the body of knowledge and operating principles developed over many years of experience. Consequently, USGIF's Universal GEOINT Essential Body of Knowledge (EBK) was created as a set of cross cutting core competencies that incorporate knowledge from a number of disciplines previously thought of as stand-alone disciplines. This periodically evolving and updated EBK blends competencies critical for those working in the GEOINT profession and serves as the GEOINT curriculum framework and a unifying platform for the GEOINT Career Pathways.

This version of USGIF's Accreditation Guidelines builds on the original Guidelines and now uses the GEOINT Essential Body of Knowledge as its primary organizing construct. It is intentional that the EBK is the central document for accreditation as it reflects the authoritative source of competencies for the practice of GEOINT.

## Accreditation Policies and Procedures

### Planning for Accreditation

Before pursuing accreditation, programs should strongly consider whether they have the time, resources, and commitment to complete the process. Programs should not plan to receive their initial accreditation until, at a minimum, one (1) year after their initial Letter of Intent. The accreditation process involves a rigorous self-review and peer evaluation. All programs wishing to start the accreditation process or have questions about the process should contact USGIF's Vice President of Academic Affairs.

### Program Eligibility

Higher education plays a key role in sustaining and growing GEOINT educational capabilities in the U.S. and abroad. Institutions that work with USGIF to grow the GEOINT field and have been awarded accreditation are known as Accredited Academic Partners.

USGIF Accredited Academic Partners share the following characteristics:

- The institution providing the program is accredited by a third-party agency.
- The program's mission is consistent with USGIF's aim to facilitate the growth and innovation of GEOINT.
- Programs are designed so the curriculum ensures that students:
  - Understand the history, origins, and evolution of GEOINT;
  - Have basic technical and analytical competencies as defined in the GEOINT EBK; and
  - Are on a pathway to professionalization.
- Programs emphasize the multi-disciplinary nature of GEOINT and the essential knowledge and skills listed in the GEOINT EBK.
- Programs deliver a common structure for their course-of-study:
  - Cover a technical core, an analytical core, technical and analytical electives, and include a Capstone course that combines some/most of the competencies covered in USGIF's GEOINT EBK.
- Programs are engaged in the GEOINT community and are committed to the professional development of faculty and students.

## Accreditation Process

USGIF's Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program has two (2) Accreditation Cycles, Fall and Spring, both taking roughly one (1) year to complete from start to finish (i.e., Letter of Intent to full accreditation). Each cycle includes the following steps:

1. Letter of Intent,
2. Accreditation Package,
3. Site Visit,
4. Application Review, and
5. Accreditation Decision by USGIF.

The Fall Accreditation Cycle starts in mid-January and concludes at the end of November. The Spring Accreditation Cycle starts in mid-August and concludes at the end of June. For exact dates for each Accreditation Cycle, reference Figure 1 (these dates are subject to change at USGIF's discretion). Applicants that miss official deadlines during the Accreditation Cycle will not be considered for accreditation and will need to reapply during the next Accreditation Cycle.

**Figure 1.** USGIF Accreditation Cycles.

Accreditation Cycle #1		Accreditation Cycle #2	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Accreditation step</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Accreditation step</i>
October 16 <sup>th</sup> – January 16 <sup>th</sup>	Submit the application fee and a Letter of Intent to USGIF	May 20 <sup>th</sup> – August 20 <sup>th</sup>	Submit the application fee and a Letter of Intent to USGIF
January 23 <sup>rd</sup>	USGIF provides applicants with accreditation package	August 27 <sup>th</sup>	USGIF provides applicants with accreditation package
By July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Applicants submit accreditation package. USGIF sends notice of receipt and schedules site visit.	By February 27 <sup>th</sup>	Applicants submit accreditation package. USGIF sends notice of receipt and schedules site visit.
July 23 <sup>rd</sup> – August 31 <sup>st</sup>	USGIF completes a site visit providing applicants a 30-day notice	February 27 <sup>th</sup> – March 31 <sup>st</sup>	USGIF completes a site visit providing applicants a 30-day notice
January 30 <sup>th</sup>	USGIF notifies applicants of Accreditation decision	August 31 <sup>st</sup>	USGIF notifies applicants of Accreditation decision

## Process for Initial Accreditation and Reaccreditation

*Note: This process has set deadlines for action. The next step in the accreditation process will not be initiated until after the official deadline. Programs are welcome to submit materials before deadlines, but USGIF will not take action on the materials until the official deadline.*



### 1. Application Fee and Letter of Intent

Prior to receiving the accreditation package, programs must submit an application fee and a Letter of Intent to USGIF. The fee total is subject to change at USGIF's discretion. The Letter of Intent must address the program's compliance with all six (6) program eligibility criteria and be signed by an individual from the institution who has administrative signature authority (e.g., President/Chancellor, Vice-President/Vice-Chancellor, Provost). Any letter submitted by programs without support from an appropriate signature authority will not be considered for accreditation.

Letters of Intent will be accepted within a 90-day window and must be submitted on or before the deadline specified in Figure 1. Letters of Intent not submitted by 11:59 PM on the official submission date will not be considered for accreditation and a new Letter of Intent will need to be submitted during the next Accreditation Cycle submission window.

Within one (1) week of the submission deadline, USGIF will acknowledge the acceptance of a program's Letter of Intent with an email that will include the accreditation package. Included in the accreditation package are:

- USGIF's *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program Policies and Procedures Manual* (.pdf)
- Editable Self-Study Report (.doc; Appendix A)
- USGIF's *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program Standards & Criteria Manual* (.pdf)
- GEOINT Essential Body of Knowledge (EBK) Matrix (.xls)
- Program of Study template (.doc)

Applicants that do not receive all the listed materials in the accreditation package or do not receive an accreditation package and believe they should have, should contact USGIF's Vice President of Academic Affairs .

### 2. Accreditation Package

Applicants are required to complete an accreditation package and submit the final materials to USGIF's Director of Academic Programs. Included in the accreditation package are:

- a) A Self-Study Report,
- b) The Universal GEOINT EBK Matrix, and
- c) A Program of Study template.

#### a) Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report is a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the strengths and limitations of the institution and program. Programs may make their own determination of how they will conduct their Self-Study, but they must follow the specific outline (Appendix A) provided by USGIF.

The strengths and limitations of the programs will be compared to the accreditation standards set forth by USGIF. Accreditation standards include:

- Standard 1: Students
- Standard 2: Program Educational Objectives
- Standard 3: Curriculum
- Standard 4: Faculty
- Standard 5: Facilities
- Standard 6: Institutional Support and Monetary Resources
- Standard 7: Recruiting/Retention
- Standard 8: Partnering with Industry/Professionals
- Standard 9: Research
- Standard 10: Continuous Improvement

For a detailed description of each standard and their requirements, reference the *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Standards & Criteria Manual*.

#### *b) EBK Matrix*

The EBK Matrix is a qualitative assessment of a program's coverage of the competencies (i.e., technical and cross-functional competencies) stated in USGIF's GEOINT EBK. The EBK Matrix allows USGIF to assess whether programs are covering an appropriate breadth of essential GEOINT topics. Programs must use the GEOINT EBK template provided by USGIF. This template is included in the accreditation package as an editable Excel document. In general, certificate programs would be expected to match the GEOINT EBK at about 50%, whereas the full undergraduate programs should be able to demonstrate at least 70% coverage of the foundational level competencies of the EBK. Graduate GEOINT programs are encouraged to showcase a more focused and specific area of interest pertaining to GEOINT or GEOINT related competencies and on acquiring specialized skills and/or to do advanced research in higher level competency areas of the GEOINT EBK (application and mastery) and beyond. USGIF strongly encourages academic programs interested in becoming accredited to explore and pioneer new and innovative areas of GEOINT within and beyond the IC/Defense. In particular, programs that identify and create new GEOINT niche markets are strongly encouraged to join the current group of USGIF accredited schools.

#### *c) Program of Study*

The Program of Study is a qualitative assessment of a program's coverage of the competencies (i.e., technical and cross-functional competencies) stated in USGIF's GEOINT EBK. The Program of Study has two parts, a course list and an external activities list.

The course list assesses the depth of knowledge students are expected to learn regarding the GEOINT EBK's technical competencies. Programs must list the course number, course name, the course's intended learning outcomes, and the technical competencies the course covers. The external activities list assesses the breadth of opportunities students are awarded to learn and demonstrate the use of the GEOINT EBK's cross-functional competencies. Programs must list the external activities (e.g., GEOINT events, conferences, field applications, internships, etc.) that students may participate in and the cross-functional competencies these activities cover.

### 3) Site Visit

By submitting a Letter of Intent, each program agrees to host a USGIF Site Visiting Team (Site Team) and allow them access to all GEOINT-related facilities, faculty and collegiate administrators, and all learning environments so they may assess the program and institution's compliance with the accreditation standards.

The Site Team will consist of two (2) members, the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs and one (1) GEOINT subject matter expert (SME). The site visit will take place over two days with all expenses to be paid by the institution/program seeking accreditation.

The site visit will occur after programs' submission of the full accreditation package (Fig.1). USGIF will provide programs notice of the Site Team's arrival at least 30-days in advance.

During the site visit, it is the Site Team's responsibility to gather the information necessary to complete a Site Visit Report. This may require the Site Team to visit various facilities, speak with current faculty and students, and sit in on meetings or classes. Prior to the Site Team's departure, they will meet with the program and/or institution leaders to review any preliminary results of the review. It is important to note that any comments made during this meeting are not considered binding. The Site Visit Report will be included in the accreditation package sent to the three external reviewers.

### 4. Accreditation Package Review

Programs must submit their accreditation package for review by 11:59 PM on the submission date designated in Figure 1. Accreditation packages not received by this time will not be reviewed and applicants will need to resubmit for accreditation, starting with a new Letter of Intent (fee will be waived if previously paid), during the next Accreditation Cycle. The accreditation package, including all materials, must be sent in **one email** to the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs at [Accreditation@usgif.org](mailto:Accreditation@usgif.org). Please also copy the email of the current Vice President of Academic Affairs (USGIF Staff directory) and reach out by phone to insure successful receipt of all documents. Any accreditation package not sent to these email addresses will not be considered for accreditation.

Within one (1) week of the submission date of the accreditation package, all accreditation materials (i.e., the accreditation package submitted by programs and the Site Visit Report) will be sent to three third-party reviewers who will determine the program's compliance with USGIF's accreditation standards.

Third-party reviewers will submit their recommended accreditation action to USGIF's Vice President of Academic Affairs. Accreditation actions available to reviewers include (1) "Award," (2) "Minor Revisions Needed," (3) "Major Revisions Needed" and (4) "Do Not Accredite." For a description of these actions, see Figure 2.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs will compile the recommendations from the three reviewers and provide the USGIF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with a recommendation on whether the program should be accredited. The final decision on accreditation rests with the

USGIF CEO. Applicants will be notified of the USGIF CEO's accreditation action decision no later than 180 days after the submission date of the accreditation package.

Accreditation of a program is granted for five years. The term of accreditation is subject to review for cause at any time during the period of accreditation. Accreditation is granted if current conditions are judged to be meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements set forth by the accreditation standards.

Figure 2. Accreditation Actions available to USGIF.

Action	Description
Award	This action indicates that the program has no deficiencies or weaknesses and is being accredited. This action has a duration of five years.
Minor Revisions Needed	This action indicates that the program has displayed some minor deficiencies or weaknesses that must be addressed prior to being accredited. This action has a duration of one month maximum. The program must submit their minor corrections to USGIF's VP of Academic Affairs. No further external review is needed.
Major Revisions Needed	This action indicates that the program has displayed serious deficiencies or weaknesses that must be addressed prior to being accredited. This action has a duration of six months. At the end of the six months, the program must submit their revision package to USGIF's Director of Academic Programs who will re-send it to the external reviewers for another round of reviews.
Do Not Accredite	This action indicates that the program has severe deficiencies or weaknesses that could not be addressed within the available timeline for major revisions. This action has a duration of two years; programs may not reapply for accreditation until the end of the two years.

*Major Revisions Needed.* This accreditation action is **NOT** a granting of accreditation. This action means that a program demonstrated promise but needs to address certain areas before a decision on the accreditation package can be made. Programs that receive this accreditation action will be given feedback on what areas of the program must be addressed. Programs will have six months to address the concerns brought to them. During this time, if USGIF deems it appropriate, a second site visit may be conducted. This site visit will follow the same rules and stipulations as the initial site visit. For programs seeking additional help to correct issues discovered by USGIF reviewers, upon request, USGIF will provide a list of subject matter

experts (SMEs) willing to provide consultation services. USGIF will not take part in these consultations outside of providing programs with SMEs name and contact information. At the end of the six months, programs must submit their revision package. The revision package includes the program's response to USGIF's initial feedback, evidence of how the program addressed the feedback, and, if applicable, any other substantive changes that occurred during the six-month period as it relates to their original accreditation package. Programs may only receive this accreditation action once. If a program was not able to adequately address the deficiencies identified by USGIF reviewers, then the program will receive a "Do Not Accredite" action.

*Do Not Accredite.* Programs that receive this action displayed severe deficiencies or weaknesses in their accreditation package that are unlikely to be addressed within the six-month period available under "Major Revisions Needed." Programs that receive this action may not reapply for accreditation for two years. If a Program receives this action when seeking reaccreditation, then the program must formally inform students and faculty affected by the termination of the program's accredited status within 60 days of notification.

A list of programs which have been accredited by USGIF is prepared bi-annually and published on USGIF's website. The accreditation status of a program listed on the USGIF website applies to all graduates who completed the program during the preceding year.

## 5. Accreditation Maintenance

For programs to maintain their accredited status, they must

1. Submit an Annual Program Review Report,
2. Submit an Annual Academic Partner fee, and
3. Participate in USGIF's Annual Summit.

Similar to the Self-Study Report, the Annual Program Review Report is a qualitative and quantitative assessment. This report is a tool USGIF uses to assess a program's commitment to continuous improvement. Programs may decide on their own how they wish to complete the assessment, but the report must follow the outline provided by USGIF (Appendix B). For details on when programs must submit their Annual Program Review, please reference USGIF's website or contact the Vice President of Academic Affairs directly.

Programs that fail to complete one or more of the maintenance requirements will receive a provisional status. If a program receives a provisional status two years in a row, then their accreditation status will be revoked. For example, if a program received initial accreditation in 2017, received a provisional status based on their 2018 Annual Program Review Report and 2019 Annual Program Review Report, then the program would need to receive normal status based on their 2020 Annual Program Review Report. If the program receives a provisional status based on their 2020 Annual Program Review Report, then their accreditation status would be revoked.

Programs that have their accreditation status revoked in this manner may not reapply for accreditation for two years. Given the example above, the program would not be eligible for accreditation until 2022.

## 6. Reaccreditation

Accredited programs are eligible to apply for reaccreditation entering the final year of their five-year accreditation term. The process, procedure, and timelines for programs seeking reaccreditation is the same as programs seeking initial accreditation. USGIF will inform accredited programs of their need to start the reaccreditation process 6 months in advance of the deadline.

## 7. Accreditation or Reaccreditation Appeal Process

Appeals and requests for reconsideration may be made only in response to “Do Not Accredit” actions. Further, appeals or requests for reconsideration may be based only upon grounds that the “Do Not Accredit” decision by USGIF was inappropriate due to errors of fact or failure to conform to USGIF’s published criteria, policies, or procedures.

## 8. Reconsideration

A program that has received a “Do Not Accredit” action may be a candidate for reconsideration if the program can demonstrate that there were major, documented errors of facts in the information used by the USGIF reviewers in arriving at the accreditation decision, or if the program believes that USGIF failed to conform with the policies and procedures published in the *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program Policies and Procedures Manual*. In such cases, the institution must submit a written request for reconsideration to the USGIF Director of Academic Programs within 30 days of receiving notification of the “Do Not Accredit” action. This request must be accompanied by a report specifying major documented errors of fact, or USGIF’s failure to conform with published accreditation policies and procedures, and how such errors contributed to the “Do Not Accredit” action, along with substantiating documentation. It is important to note; this documentation must only address errors made based on the original accreditation package. Programs **CANNOT** include any changes made to the program based on the feedback received from the accreditation package review.

The USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs will have 60 days from the program’s request for reconsideration submission to review the provided materials. By the end of the 60 days, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will notify the program whether an error was made. If the Vice President of Academic Affairs believes an error was made, then he/she will submit the program’s submitted materials to the original reviewers. The next steps follow the process for accreditation as specified above; reviewers have 60 days to review the materials and the USGIF CEO has 30 days to arrive at an accreditation decision based on reviewers’ recommendations. For an example of the process, please see Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** Reconsideration timeline.

<b>Accreditation Cycle #1</b>		<b>Accreditation Cycle #2</b>	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Accreditation step</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Accreditation step</i>
January 30 <sup>th</sup>	Program receives a “Do Not Accredited” action on their accreditation package	August 31 <sup>st</sup>	Program receives a “Do Not Accredited” action on their accreditation package
February 16 <sup>th</sup>	Program submits a written request for reconsideration to the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs	September 16 <sup>th</sup>	Program submits a written request for reconsideration to the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	The Vice President of Academic Affairs notifies the program whether an error was made during application review	October 16 <sup>h</sup>	Vice President of Academic Affairs notifies the program whether an error was made during application review
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	Vice President of Academic Affairs submits reconsideration materials to original reviewers	October 20 <sup>th</sup>	Vice President of Academic Affairs submits reconsideration materials to original reviewers
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Vice President of Academic Affairs submits reviewers’ new accreditation action recommendations to USGIF CEO.	December 20 <sup>th</sup>	Vice President of Academic Affairs submits reviewers’ new accreditation action recommendations to USGIF CEO.
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Vice President of Academic Affairs notifies the program of reconsideration decision	January 20 <sup>th</sup>	Vice President of Academic Affairs notifies the program of reconsideration decision

*\*Note: These dates are subject to change at USGIF’s discretion.*

## 9. Appeal

A program requesting an appeal must submit a notice of appeal, by someone with signature authority, to the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs within 30 days of receiving notification of a “Do Not Accredited” action. This submission must include reasons why a “Do Not Accredited” decision is inappropriate because of errors of fact or USGIF failed to conform to the published policies and procedures and/or publish accreditation standards. Within one (1) week of the submission date for appeals, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will notify the program that the appeal was received, and the appeal process is being initiated. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will select three new reviewers; these new reviewers will make up the appeal panel. The appeal panel will be provided with new, unmarked copies of the program’s original accreditation package. The reviewers will be given three months to review the accreditation package and come to a final accreditation decision. The reviewers will review the package individually, then come together as a group to reach consensus on which accreditation action should be taken. The only role USGIF will play in this process will be to arrange how and when the reviewers meet. USGIF will not play a role in deciding what accreditation action is taken.

Once the appeal panel reaches consensus, USGIF's Vice President of Academic Affairs will notify the program, in writing, of the decision and the basis for the decision. The decision rendered by the appeal panel is final and may not be reconsidered or appealed.



# USGIF Policies and Procedures

## 1. Responsibilities of USGIF as an Accreditation Body

The Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program is managed by the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs, with collegiate program accreditation activities performed independently by panels of SMEs selected from the already accredited schools points of contact/deputies and other qualified members of the GEOINT community. The Vice President of Academic Affairs is charged with:

- Proposing policies, procedures, and criteria to the USGIF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for approval. The USGIF CEO shall review the proposed policies, procedures, and criteria, and may specify changes as appropriate.
- Administering the accreditation process based on policies and procedures approved by the USGIF CEO and render accreditation actions based on evaluations presented by accreditation package reviewers.

Accreditation actions are based solely on official accreditation standards, policies, and procedures as published by USGIF. Other documents published by USGIF or member organizations are advisory in nature.

It is the responsibility of USGIF to provide the graduates of accredited programs with a USGIF GEOINT certificate in the form of a digital badge. In the months prior to graduation, the point of contact (POC) from accredited programs will provide USGIF with documentation listing the name, address, and email of students who meet the following requirements:

- Were enrolled in an accredited GEOINT Program,
- Have satisfied the GEOINT certificate requirements, and
- Have satisfied the governing institution's requirements for graduation at the appropriate level.

Within the months following the end of a student's graduating semester, they will be awarded their certificate as a digital badge and can opt to also order a print certificate for a minimal fee.

These certificates are tied to the level at which students have received their education. Certificates **cannot** be transferred to another level of education. For example, if a student has met the requirements specified above for a Bachelor's degree, they will receive the GEOINT certificate that is only for their Bachelor's degree. If the same student pursued a Master's degree, then they have to fulfill all the requirements for that degree and receive a second GEOINT certificate.

## 2. Conflict of Interest

Service as a USGIF accreditation panel member creates situations that may result in conflicts of interest or questions regarding the objectivity and credibility of the accreditation process. USGIF expects these individuals to behave in a professional and ethical manner, to disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest, and to recuse themselves from discussions or decisions related to real or perceived conflicts of interest. The intent of this policy is to:

- Maintain credibility in the accreditation process and confidence in the decisions of the accreditation panel,
- Assure fairness and impartiality in decision-making, and
- Act impartially and avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Individuals representing USGIF must not participate in any decision-making capacity if they have or have had a close, active association with a program or institution that is being considered for official accreditation action by USGIF. Close, active association includes, but is not limited to:

- Current or past employment as faculty, staff, or consultant by the institution or program;
- Current or past discussion or negotiation of employment with the institution or program;
- Attendance as student at the institution;
- Receipt of an honorary degree from the institution;
- An institution or program where a close, family relative is a student or employee; or
- An unpaid official relationship with an institution (e.g., membership on the institution's board of trustees or industry advisory board).

A record of real or perceived conflicts of interest will be maintained for all those involved in the accreditation process. Individuals must abstain themselves from any portion of a USGIF meeting in which discussions or decisions occur for which they have a real or perceived conflict of interest. Real or perceived conflicts may occur if there is:

- A close, active association with a program or institution;
- A financial, or personal interest; or
- Any reason that the individual cannot render an unbiased decision.

The names of individuals who have recused themselves during a meeting for conflicts of interest will be recorded.

### 3. Confidentiality

Information supplied by the institution is for the confidential use of USGIF and its agents, and will not be disclosed without the specific written authorization of the institution concerned.

The contents of all materials furnished for review purposes and discussion during accreditation panel meetings are considered privileged information.

The contents of those documents and the accreditation actions taken may be disclosed only by USGIF staff and only under appropriate circumstances. All communications between institutions and reviewers regarding final accreditation actions must be referred to USGIF headquarters.

#### 4. Complaints

It is the policy of USGIF to review all complaints received from any source, including students, against either an accredited program or USGIF itself that are related to compliance with USGIF's accreditation standards and criteria or procedures and to resolve any such complaints in a timely, fair, and equitable manner. Furthermore, it is the policy of USGIF to retain all documentation associated with any such complaint received against an accredited program for a period of not less than one Accreditation Cycle (typically five years), and for a period of not less than five (5) years for any complaints received against USGIF itself.

Accredited Programs must maintain a record of student complaints and upon written request, make that record available to USGIF.

USGIF will not pursue complaints that are not in writing or that are anonymous. Receipts of all complaints will be acknowledged within 14 days.

USGIF cannot assume authority for enforcing the policies of programs or institutions regarding faculty, professional staff, or student rights. USGIF does not adjudicate, arbitrate, or mediate individual grievances against a program or institution.

Complaints will be reviewed initially by the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs. If the complaint is not within the purview of USGIF, the complainant will be notified, and no further action will be taken. If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will forward a copy of the complaint to the USGIF CEO within 14 days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant will be notified within 14 days of the receipt whether the complaint falls within the purview of USGIF and the next steps in the investigative process.

#### 5. Complaints against an institution or its programs

- If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will forward a copy of the complaint to the USGIF Executives and to the principal administrative officers of the institution with a request for an institutional response within 30 days. The institutional response will be reviewed by the USGIF CEO within 30 days of receipt.
- If USGIF determines that the institutional response satisfactorily addresses the issue or issues raised in the complaint, the matter will be considered closed. Within 14 days of the determination, the complainant will be informed in writing of the results of the determination.
- In the event that an institutional response is not received by USGIF within 30 days of the request for the response, or if the response is not deemed to have satisfactorily resolved the issue, USGIF may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including revocation of accreditation.
- If the institution has released incorrect or misleading information regarding the accreditation status of the institution or program, or the accreditation action taken by USGIF, the institution will be required to make a public correction.

## 6. Complaints against USGIF

- If the complaint is concerned with USGIF's criteria, policies, or procedures or with the implementation of these, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will forward a copy of the complaint to the USGIF CEO within 14 days of receipt.
- If it appears that a USGIF representative or an individual working on behalf of USGIF may have violated USGIF's criteria, policies, or procedures, that individual will be asked to respond to the issues raised in the complaint within 30 days. The USGIF CEO will make the determination within 30 days of receipt of the response. The complainant will be notified of the final action of the USGIF CEO and Board of Directors in writing within 14 days of the determination.
- If USGIF determines that a violation has occurred, USGIF will counsel the responsible party and may take further action as circumstances warrant, up to and including termination as an USGIF representative. If USGIF finds that a violation of its policies or procedures has occurred which may have had an effect on the accreditation action, USGIF may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including an immediate revisit to the institution.
- Complaints against USGIF employees will be handled in accordance with the USGIF Employee Manual and may result in actions up to and including termination of employment.

## Appendix A

### Self-Study Report Outline

The USGIF accreditation process is designed to support and facilitate Geospatial Intelligence Programs development. Programs are encouraged to contact the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs to answer any questions regarding the report prior to submission.

The Self-Study Report is a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the strengths and limitations of the institution and program. Programs determine how they will conduct their Self-Study, but they must follow the outline provided here. Subdivisions of the Self-Study Report articulate the accreditation standards described in the *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Standards & Criteria Manual*.

#### **Title Page**

- Name of Institution
- Name of Program
- Point of Contact and Deputy Contact Information:
  - Name
  - Position
  - Mailing Address
  - Telephone Number
  - E-mail Address

#### **Table of Contents**

- Page references for document sections
- Include headings and sub-headings

#### **Background**

- Summary of Organizational Structure (use text and/or show individually or collectively using organizational charts):
- Program structure
- Administrative unit structure
- Administrative unit within the Institutional structure
- Summary of Program Delivery Modes (e.g., days, evenings, weekends, co-op, off-campus, distance/online)
- Information regarding other institutionally obtained accreditation(s) and membership in teaching and research networks.

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#### **Accreditation Standards**

##### **Students**

- Describe the policies guiding general students through the institution and a comparison with the requirements for GEOINT students. Include in this description information such as credit hours per semester, graduation requirements, and general education requirements.
- Describe how the program publicly informs people of any changes in policies,

procedures, or information that may affect students.

- Describe the policies governing the upkeep and safety of students' educational records.

*(Only for programs seeking reaccreditation)*

- List all places where the program's accreditation status is publicly displayed.
- List all places where substantive changes to the program are communicated to students.

### ***Program Educational Objectives***

- List the mission and objectives of the overall GEOINT Program and describe how the mission and objectives align with the core values, mission, and goals of USGIF.
- Describe where information regarding the alignment of the program's educational objectives align with USGIF's Curriculum Framework.
- Describe the procedures guiding a formative and summative evaluation of the program's achievement of its educational objectives.

### ***Curriculum***

- Describe how both the formative and summative evaluation results are used to guide the enhancement of the program.
- Explain who reviews the GEOINT curriculum and when the review takes place.
- Describe how the program's curriculum matches the GEOINT EBK and accomplishes the objectives set forth by USGIF in Standard 3.3.
- Describe the introductory GEOINT module(s) offered and the GEOINT Capstone experience required for students. Provide in depth details of the structure of the GEOINT capstone experience (i.e., format, faculty credentials, process for research topic selection or internship placement, process for research mentorship/internship supervising, metrics for evaluation, venues for dissemination of projects, etc.). Demonstrate a suitable array of prerequisites using the EBK matrix provided by USGIF.
- Suggest updates, changes or potential additions to the GEOINT EBK that are necessary to insure program growth, innovation, and sustainability.
- Explain how the program ensures students can understand and apply GEOINT competencies regardless of the type of software, tools, technologies, and/or approaches used.
- (For Certificate Programs Only) List the number of credit hours required to complete the certificate program and individual/overall grade requirements by course (if applicable).
- (For Foreign applicants only) Include a United States equivalence report demonstrating course-by-course credit and grade equivalence.

### ***Faculty***

- List the educational qualifications required by the program's governing institution and the educational qualifications of the current GEOINT staff (e.g., years of experience, degree, GEOINT related certifications, etc.).
- Provide the number of students currently enrolled in the GEOINT Program and the teacher to student ratio (please do not provide personally identifiable student information that may contravene with FERPA law).

- Describe the policies and procedures directing faculty performance evaluations.
- Include a two-page biographical sketch for all relevant faculty that includes the following information:
  - Experience in the core areas specified in the Universal GEOINT EBK,
  - Teaching excellence,
  - GEOINT related products (e.g., research, publications),
  - GEOINT related community service or consulting experience, and
  - Demonstrated participation in GEOINT related professional societies.

### ***Facilities***

- Provide a summary and description (including availability and adequacy for the Program) of the following:
  - Classroom space,
  - Laboratory space,
  - Computer (hardware, software) resources,
  - Learning and Content Management System (if available),
  - Other relevant equipment (e.g., spectrometer, network analyzer, etc.),
  - For online and distance learning courses/program, also include summary and description of, where applicable:
    - Course management system
    - Video-conferencing
    - Other relevant technologies
- Describe how students are taught about the available tools, equipment, computing resources, and laboratories available to the program.
- Describe the computing and information infrastructure in place.
- Describe the personal space offered to faculty to accomplish private and confidential work.

### ***Institutional support and monetary resources***

- Summarize the monetary resources of the program and incentives offered by the institution to attract and retain faculty, support the stability of the program, and meet the program's educational objectives.
- Describe the amount of faculty, support personnel, and institutional services available to operate the facilities and equipment appropriate for the program.

### ***Recruiting/Retention***

- Summarize the policies and procedures for recruiting and admitting students into the GEOINT Program.
- List where student expectations for admission to, continuation in, and completion of the program can be found.
- Describe how faculty/staff ensure that students continue to meet the demands of the program (e.g., mentorship, career pathway, advising, etc.) and are ready to enter the GEOINT profession or professions using GEOINT competencies.
- Describe when formal student advising occurs and for what purpose(s). For certificates only, please include a timeline and explanation of when and how do students declare GEOINT certificate enrollment.

- Describe the procedures for documenting students' progress toward graduation requirements.
- Provide evidence for program's efforts to recruit both traditional and non-traditional students (e.g., older students, working professionals, students from other majors).
- Provide evidence of adequate student enrollment history and retention rates.

#### ***Partnering with Industry/Professionals***

- List and explain the relationships the program has established with professional GEOINT employers and the benefits this relationship has brought to the program (if applicable).
- List and explain the program's participation in professional GEOINT organizations (if applicable).

#### ***Research***

- Explain how the program encourages faculty to pursue and complete GEOINT-related research and other scholarly activities.
- Explain how the program encourages students to participate in GEOINT-related research and other scholarly activities.

#### ***Continuous Improvement***

- Describe the procedures for performing an evaluation of the program's achievement of its educational objectives and its goals.
- *(For programs seeking initial accreditation)* Describe how the results of the Annual Program Review Report will be used to improve the program.
- *(For programs seeking reaccreditation)* Describe how the results of the Annual Program Review Report have been used to improve the overall program.
- Describe how students' perspectives of the program's success is incorporated into an annual evaluation.



## Appendix B

### Annual Program Review Report Outline

The USGIF accreditation maintenance process is designed to support and facilitate Geospatial Intelligence Programs self-evaluation and development. Programs are encouraged to contact the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs to answer any questions regarding the report prior to submission.

The Annual Program Review Report is a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the strengths and limitations of the institution and program. Programs determine how they will conduct their review, but they must follow the outline provided here. Subdivisions of the Annual Program Review Report articulate the accreditation standards described in the *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Standards & Criteria Manual*.

#### **Title Page**

- Name of Institution
- Name of Program
- Primary Contact and Deputy Contact:
  - Name
  - Position
  - Mailing Address
  - Telephone Number
  - E-mail Address

#### **Short Overview of the Program**

- Program strengths and challenges as they relate to student recruitment, enrollment and retention, faculty professional development and retention, institutional support, student internship/job placement.
- A list of GEOINT related accomplishments (events, activities, and products) taking place within the reported academic year (to include faculty and student work, new institutional collaborations, grants/awards, GEOINT publications, faculty/students' achievements, etc.), plans for future success.
- An updated chart showing student growth in the GEOINT Program as well as estimated numbers for the following year.
- A list of events/ websites where the GEOINT Program has been marketed.

#### **Substantive Changes**

- Summarize any substantial changes to the program based on initial accreditation and reaccreditation feedback.
- Summarize any substantial changes to the program in regard to the accreditation standards set in the *Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program Standards & Criteria Manual*.
- Important note: if any changes have occurred to the curriculum (adding/eliminating course), these changes will need to be discussed with the USGIF Vice President of Academic Affairs before being implemented. USGIF should receive a one pager

describing the change, rationale, the new course matching to the GEOINT EBK (or, if outside of the EBK, rationale for not matching it to the EBK), and a table containing the list of previous courses and the list of proposed courses. The one pager should be accompanied by the course syllabus. After reviewing the materials, USGIF may request a phone call with the program POC. If approval granted/not granted, the program will receive a letter (email) from USGIF. While USGIF respects academic freedom and strongly encourages curriculum updates and innovation, changes should fall within the purview of the initially awarded accreditation.

*\*Note: A description of substantial changes should be in order of the accreditation standards as it appears in the Collegiate Geospatial Intelligence Accreditation Program Standards & Criteria Manual. If no changes have occurred for a particular standard, then programs should state that no changes have been made.*

### **Comments**

- Please type here any additional information and suggestions/recommendations to USGIF and/or requests for USGIF support.

### **Annexes**

- Attach up to five documents to provide evidence for Short Overview of the Program and/or Substantive Changes sections of the Report. Please ensure that the information and materials strictly refer to the GEOINT Program, not the entire School or institution.