Certified Geographic Information Systems Professional (GISP)

All GIS practitioners can apply for certification as a GISP. The courses (and degrees) offered in the School of Geography and Earth Sciences fulfills the educational requirements for professional certification. The full requirements can be found at https://www.gisci.org/Students/AbouttheProgram.aspx

In short, to qualify as a GISP, one must accumulate a minimum of 150 points from three different categories: Education (minimum 30 points), Experience (minimum 60 points), and Contributions (minimum 8 points). The remaining 52 points needed for certification can come from any category. In addition, there is an exam which can be written any time after graduation.

The education component is broken down into 3 parts:

**Credential points** - points earned through successful completion of a formal degree (BA, BS, MA, PhD) or certificate program offered by accredited educational institutions. Applicants may claim credential points equal to the value of the highest degree or certificate earned. Points awarded as follows:

- Masters Degree or PhD 25 points
- Bachelors Degree 20 points
- Associates Degree 10 points
- GIS Certificate 5 points

**Course points** - Only formal courses and workshops that focus specifically upon GIS science, technology, and/or applications are eligible for Course Points. Relevant courses may be counted even if they were completed as part of another degree or certificate program for which the applicant has also claimed Credential Points or for a degree that was not completed. Course titles should be listed in the schedule as they appear on the supporting transcript, syllabi, or other documentation. Non-specific course titles such as ‘Independent Study’ can be augmented with the actual study title and some accompanying documentation indication that GIS science was applied in the course.

**Conference Attendance Points** - points are awarded in recognition of the valuable informal learning afforded by participation in meetings and conferences sponsored by professional societies and regional and local user groups. For example, attending the ESRI User Conference in Toronto or London would qualify.

Here is an example of an undergraduate student who completes a Bachelor’s degree and the minimum number of courses for the Minor in GIS:
**Credential Points:** 20 points for a Bachelor’s Degree

**Course Points:** each three unit university course in GIS conducted over a thirteen week semester involves 117 student activity hours (3 units \(\times\) 3 activity hours per unit \(\times\) 13 weeks course duration). **GISCI awards 1 point for every 40 documented student activity hours.**

So each course related to GIS earns **2.925 points** \((117 / 40)\). A student completing the Minor in GIS will have at least 5* of the following courses:

Earth / Envir / Geog 2GI3, Earth / Envir / Geog 3GI3, Earth / Envir / Geog 3GV3, Earth / Envir / Geog 3SR3, Earth / Envir / Geog 4GA3, Geog 4GS3, Geog 4GT3

Any combination of the above 5 courses would earn 14.625 points toward certification. This is in addition to the 20 credential points for the Bachelor’s degree, totaling 34.625 points, exceeding the minimum education requirement of 30 points. The extra 4.625 points can be applied against the remaining 52 points required to meet the 150 total points needed for certification.

Each additional course (including an internship course**, independent study and a thesis, provided they are GIS related) would earn an extra 2.925 per course (except the thesis which is worth 5.85 points since it is 6 units).

*EARTH SC / ENVIR SC / GEOG 3MB3, or STATS 2B03, are required for the Minor in GIS however, as of 2016-2017, neither would qualify under the course points since there is no GIS component in the course. Previous iterations of 3MB3 would qualify since GIS was used within the course.

** Any internship course has a double benefit as it counts toward both the Education component and the Experience component.

If you have any questions, please contact Patrick DeLuca (who is a certified GISP) (delucapf@mcmaster.ca)