



**FOR RECOMMENDATION**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** UTM Academic Affairs Committee

**SPONSOR:** Professor Amrita Daniere, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean

**CONTACT INFO:** 905-828-3719, [vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca)

**PRESENTER:** Professor Laura Brown, Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment

**CONTACT INFO:** [Lc.brown@utoronto.ca](mailto:Lc.brown@utoronto.ca)

**DATE:** January 4, 2021 for January 11, 2021

**AGENDA ITEM:** 3

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Program Closure: Geocomputational Science Specialist, UTM

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Under section 5.6 of its *Terms of Reference*, the Academic Affairs Committee is responsible for major and minor modifications to existing degree programs. All major modifications shall be reported annually for information to the appropriate body of Governing Council.

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. UTM Academic Affairs Committee [For Recommendation] (January 11, 2021)
2. Committee on Academic Policy & Programs [For Approval] (January 12, 2021)

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

No previous action was taken on this proposal.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

The Geocomputational Science Specialist program (ERSPE2171), offered by the Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment (previously Department of Geography) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) was launched in 2008 as a 14.0 credit undergraduate specialist program. The aim of the program was to combine two fields of study, Geography and Computer Science, providing students with a foundation in geographic theory and skills in computer science. The program paired a typical course load for a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Major (7.5 credits) with additional courses in computer science, mathematics, and optional courses in statistics. The program never operated successfully as it did not attract student interest. The program has had no student enrollment since its launch in 2008, and as of August 31, 2013, the program was administratively suspended. The Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment (GGE) is proposing the closure of the Geocomputational

Science Specialist to formalize the program’s current status, allowing the Department to focus on their more successful GIS major and minor programs.

The impact of this closure to students, faculty and staff will be negligible as this program did not see any enrolments and has been administratively suspended since 2013.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no net implications for the campus’ operating budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Be It Recommended,

THAT the Program Closure of the Geocomputational Science Specialist Program, UTM, recommended by the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean, Professor Amrita Daniere, and described in the proposal dated October 13, 2020, be approved, effective September 1, 2021.

---

**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

Program Closure: Geocomputational Science Specialist, UTM



## University of Toronto Proposal for the Closure of an Existing Program (Graduate or Undergraduate)

*(This template has been developed in line with the University of Toronto's Quality Assurance Process.)*

*The process followed for the closure of any program is the same as that required for the approval of any new such program.*

<b>Closure Proposed:</b> Please specify precisely what is being closed:	Specialist Program in Geocomputational Science (ERSPE2171)
<b>Department / Unit (if applicable):</b>	Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment
<b>Faculty / Academic Division:</b>	University of Toronto Mississauga
<b>Faculty / Academic Division contact:</b>	Amrita Daniere Vice-Principal Academic & Dean, UTM <a href="mailto:vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca">vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca</a>
<b>Dean's Office Contact:</b>	Yen Du Program & Curriculum Officer <a href="mailto:yen.du@utoronto.ca">yen.du@utoronto.ca</a>
<b>Department / Unit contact:</b>	Yuhong He Chair, Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment <a href="mailto:chair.utm.geography@utoronto.ca">chair.utm.geography@utoronto.ca</a>
<b>Effective date program will be closed to new admissions:</b>	August 31, 2013
<b>Effective date of full closure of program:</b>	August 31, 2021
<b>Version Date:</b>	October 13, 2020

# 1 Brief Summary

The Geocomputational Science Specialist program (ERSPE2171), offered by the Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment (previously Department of Geography) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) was launched in 2008 as a 14.0 credit undergraduate specialist program. The aim of the program was to combine two fields of study, Geography and Computer Science, providing students with a foundation in geographic theory and skills in computer science. The program paired a typical course load for a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Major (7.5 credits) with additional courses in computer science, mathematics, and optional courses in statistics. The program never operated successfully as it did not attract student interest. The program has had no student enrollment since its launch in 2008, and as of August 31, 2013, the program was administratively suspended with a corresponding notation added to the Academic Calendar. This proposal to close the Specialist Program in Geocomputational Science, effective August, 31, 2021, will formalize the current status of the program.

# 2 Rationale

The Specialist Program in Geocomputational Science was launched in September 2008 and since that time has had no student enrolment. With no enrolment in five years, the Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment (GGE) administratively suspended the program in August of 2013 to re-assess the program structure, how it may have failed to meet student need and/ or interest, and if the program aligned with the overall mission and long-term plans of the Department. Two major factors may have acted as deterrents to students: first, the demanding and specific mixture of program completion requirements in mathematics, computer science, geographical science, statistics, and spatial analysis; and second, confusion between this specialist program and the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) major. For the former, the program completion requirements made for a very rigid program structure and likely increased difficulty in scheduling to allow for academic exploration in elective options (outside of the program). In the case of the latter, it may not have been immediately clear to students the difference between the Geocomputational Science and GIS programs. As a major program requiring 7.5 credits and offering a more specific focus in geographical science and spatial analysis, the GIS Major provided students increased flexibility within the program (more course choice) and outside of the program (increased flexibility and options for electives; increased academic breadth by pairing this with another major or two minors of the student's choosing).

Through internal review of the Department's academic offerings and consultation with the Department of Mathematical & Computational Sciences (MCS) at UTM, GGE is proposing the closure of the Geocomputational Science Specialist to allow the Department to focus on their more successful GIS major and minor programs. Students with a strong interest and aptitude for geographical science, spatial analysis and computer science will be encouraged and supported to explore program pairings in GIS and Computer Science for their degree. Completion of programs in both subject areas will allow students to achieve comparable learning objectives and develop similar skill sets originally envisioned for the Geocomputational Science Specialist while providing flexibility to students.

### 3 Impact on other programs/units of the proposed closure

There is no impact on other programs or units. There has been no student enrolment and the Program has not been available for entry since August 31, 2013. This program utilized existing course offerings from GGE and MCS that also support other programs. No current courses will need to be retired as a result of this closure.

### 4 Student Accommodation

**Table 1: Undergraduate**

	Year one	Year two	Year three	Year four
<b>2020-21 enrolment</b>	0	0	0	0

There are currently no students enrolled in the program. Therefore, there is no need to provide accommodations. As indicated earlier, the program has not been available for student entry since August 31, 2013, so closure will have no impact on current and future students or on courses offered by the departments of GGE and MCS.

### 5 Faculty / Staff Accommodation

There will also be no impact on faculty or staff as the program did not require additional faculty or staff resources.

### 6 Governance Process

Steps	Approving Body	Approval Date
<b>Development/consultation within Unit</b>	Yuhong He Chair, Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment	October 4, 2020
<b>Decanal &amp; Provostial Sign-Off</b>	Heather Miller Vice-Dean, Teaching & Learning	October 5, 2020
	VPAP sign-off	October 13, 2020
<b>Divisional Governance Approval</b>	UTM Academic Affairs Committee	January 11, 2021
<b>AP&amp;P</b>		<b>January 12, 2021</b>
<b>Ontario Quality Council – reported annually</b>		<b>July 2021</b>

MTCU – reported annually	
--------------------------	--