**Graduate Learning Assessment, Environmental Studies Program (ENVS)**

# Graduate Degree Learning Outcomes

The Environmental Studies Program (ENVS) is intentionally an interdepartmental and inter-college program, rather than a department. Environmental Studies faculty members are drawn from many departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as from the professional schools. This structure ensures that the program has access to the breadth of disciplines and professions that are needed to understand and address environmental issues, and it recognizes that study of the environment is embedded in many different units of the university. The ENVS program is also intentionally connected to the community and committed to working on real-world environmental problems to provide educational benefits and community service. The doctoral program in Environmental Sciences, Studies, and Policy (ESSP) offers a unique opportunity to pursue interdisciplinary study of environmental issues while gaining a thorough grounding in the methods and knowledge-base of a traditional discipline. Students focus their study in any field that offers the Ph. D. at University of Oregon, and supplement this focal area with secondary concentration courses drawn from any area of graduate study outside the focal department in the University. This flexibility allows our students to design an individualized curriculum responsive to their educational and career goals. For the Master's degree, the program emphasizes a flexible and individualized program to provide students with an opportunity to integrate different perspectives and develop creative approaches to their study of environmental topics.

ENVS encourages innovative and interdisciplinary work culminating in first-rate, interdisciplinary scholarship and creative projects that draw from the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, environmental design, law and policy, journalism, and education. Students design an individualized course plan and select faculty mentors from across the university to advise them in developing and completing their projects and theses. The individualized nature and flexibility of the program provides students with an opportunity to integrate different perspectives and develop creative approaches to their study of environmental topics. Our graduate program prepares students to obtain a degree in a timely manner in preparation for an academic career or for a career in applied fields.

Specific learning outcomes vary depending on individual course plans and courses, but we identify the following overlapping fundamentals for learning outcomes:

* To gain an interdisciplinary perspective of the fields of studies and how they can be used to address environmental research.
* To familiarize themselves with the research methods available within and across disciplines, and to acquire competent, demonstrable, and autonomous research skills in their specializations.
* To discuss a relevant body of scholarly literature fluently and to generate compelling research questions.
* To identify or develop, and to apply, rigorous research methods in an independent investigation of a problem of contemporary environmental importance.
* To develop concrete skills in professional writing and scholarly communications in order to present and disseminate research results in compelling, appropriate formats.
* To accumulate knowledge and prepare themselves for job markets of their preferred fields, such as by gaining experience and skills in pedagogy and teaching for Ph.D. students seeking academic careers.
* To be engaged in fostering communication and collaboration between departments, colleges, and the university as a whole.

**Graduate Degree Assessment Plan: Master's Program**

**Requirements**. Based on the Program Requirements articulated in the "Environmental Studies Student Handbook—Master's Program," ENVS assesses each Master's student by requiring the following components of the degree and through regular meetings with the ENVS Director of Graduate Studies and student advisors and committee members:

**1.** ENVS 631, 632, and 633 CORE SEQUENCE (9 credits total)   
*One 4-credit, one 2-credit, and one 3-credit course during the first year.*

**2.** CONCENTRATION AREA COURSEWORK (minimum of 12 credits per area)   
*Two areas, to be designed by the student with approval of their advisor. Each area focuses on a specific subject/discipline or a theme, and should complement each other.*

**3.** ELECTIVES (12 credits)   
*Students choose at least 12 credits of electives. Students may take more elective credits, but only 12 will apply to the degree. An approved Internship (ENVS 604) may be substituted for 4 of these credits.*

**4.** ENVS 503, THESIS *or* ENVS 609, TERMINAL PROJECT (12 credits)   
*Students begin taking these credits in their second year, after they have completed a significant portion of their coursework. The selection of a Committee Chair, and the decision whether to complete a THESIS or PROJECT need to be finalized before approval to register will be granted.*

**5.** ORAL THESIS/PROJECT DEFENSE   
*A public defense of the thesis or presentation of the project is required.*

**Satisfactory Academic Progress toward the Degree**. Each student is responsible for meeting Graduate School requirements and ensuring that necessary committees have been appointed and proper forms have been filed on time. ENVS assesses satisfactory degree progress by requiring the following steps:

***First Year***

By the middle (6th week) of spring term, students are expected to:

* Submit a *First Year Course Plan* with a preliminary Advisory Committee list

By the end of Spring term, students are expected to have completed:

* Required ENVS core sequence (9 credits)
* Submission of a written thesis/project proposal signed by the committee chair (advisor)
* At least 27 hours of graduate course work with a minimum GPA of 3.0

***Second Year***

By the end of Winter term, students are expected to:

* Submit an *Approved Course Plan* with Advisory Committee members’ signatures

By the end of Spring term students are expected to complete, or be progressing satisfactorily toward completing:

* All course work with a minimum GPA of 3.0

**Graduate Degree Assessment Plan: Ph.D. Program**

**Requirements**. Based on the Program Requirements articulated in the "Environmental Sciences, Studies, and Policy Doctoral Student Handbook," ENVS assesses each Ph.D. student in the ESSP degree through several components. The ESSP requirements differ slightly depending on whether students' focus is in the social sciences/humanities/professional schools (ESSP Studies and Policy track), or in the natural sciences (ESSP Natural Sciences track). The track will be determined at the time of admission or at the beginning of the first year. In general terms, Natural Science track students work on research questions related to natural phenomena and use natural science research methods, while ESSP Studies and Policy track students are those who focus on the social sciences; humanities; environmental management, policy and law; environmental design; environmental education; etc.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES CORE COURSES

These courses (ENVS 631: Theory and Practice, 4 credits, and ENVS 607: Approaches to Interdisciplinary Environmental Science, 4 credits) provide a) an introduction to the ENVS program and faculty and resources available for graduate students; b) a foundation in the key themes and history of the field of environmental studies; c) an introduction to the practice of interdisciplinary research; and d) professional development opportunities.

**2.** FOCAL DEPARTMENT COURSES

ESSP students gain a foundation in the methods of a particular discipline by selecting a focal department and completing a group of courses required by that department. Some students pursue a major concentration rather than focal department requirements.

**3.** CONCENTRATION AREA COURSES

The concentration courses add interdisciplinary breadth to your program.

**4.** ASSESSMENTS OF COMPETENCE

These are typically written and oral comprehensive exams that test your background knowledge in your interdisciplinary fields and your preparation for doing independent research. After completion of the assessments of competence, you will advance to candidacy for the Ph.D. This status signifies you have completed course requirements and are focusing on your dissertation.

**5.** DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Completion and defense of a written dissertation and approval by your dissertation committee.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress toward the Degree**. The number of credits required for the Ph.D. in ESSP varies depending on the student’s track (Natural Science or Studies/Policy) and the focal department. ESSP students must meet the Graduate School minimum requirements for residency, minimum credits, time to completion, etc. Each student is responsible for meeting Graduate School requirements and ensuring that necessary committees have been appointed and proper forms have been filed on time. ENVS assesses satisfactory degree progress by requiring the following steps:

***First Year***

By the middle of fall term, you are expected to have completed:

* A preliminary course plan approved in a meeting attended by your preliminary advisor, the ENVS and focal department DGSs, and the ENVS and focal department GPCs.

By the end of Spring term, you are expected to have completed:

* Required ENVS core sequence
* Required focal department core sequence
* Annual advising meeting. Submit annual report to ENVS GPC by the end of week 10.

***Second Year***

By the end of Spring term you are expected to have completed:

* Second year courses as required by the focal department
* Annual advising meeting. Submit annual report to ENVS GPC by the end of week 10.
* Some of the coursework for the ENVS concentration area(s)

***Third Year***

By the end of Spring term you are expected to have completed:

* Annual advising meeting. Submit annual report to ENVS GPC by the end of week 10.

By the end of Spring term you are expected to have completed, or be progressing satisfactorily toward completing:

* Coursework for the ENVS concentration areas
* Focal department requirements for assessments of competence

***Fourth Year***

By the end of Spring term you are expected to:

* Have advanced to candidacy
* Have an approved dissertation committee
* Have an annual advising meeting or proposal defense. Submit annual report to ENVS GPC by the end of week 10.
* Have an approved dissertation proposal