Frequently Asked Questions about ENRP*

Q. Is it important to have completed a master’s degree before applying?

A. Yes. The strongest candidates to ENRP have already completed a major research project (thesis) as part of a master’s degree program, which might have been at ESF or elsewhere. While it may be possible to make an exception for a stellar candidate, this is highly unlikely.

Q. How long does it take to complete the doctoral degree in ENRP?

A. The time varies with individual situations; at a minimum, completing all the necessary requirements would take about three years. Courses taken for the master’s degree are often used to help fill the requirements for the doctoral degree.

Q. Does everyone who is enrolled in this program get financial support?

A. Unfortunately, we are not able to support every student we accept. Some faculty members may be able to support students on research grants. A limited number of graduate assistantships are available, and they are awarded to the most highly qualified applicants. We strongly encourage all prospective students to explore independent opportunities for funding their own graduate studies (especially those who are applying from abroad). It’s important to know that the lead time for some of these programs (e.g. Fulbright) may be more than 12 months, so advance planning is essential.

Q. Do I need to specify a major professor on my application to ENRP?

A. It is strongly suggested, because otherwise it is unclear whether there is any match between your interests and our faculty’s expertise. The strongest applicants have already corresponded with one or more professors in advance of submitting their application. If you fail to specify who you are interested in working with, it makes it harder to evaluate your application, and that undermines your chances for admission.

Q. Do you admit new students starting in the spring semester (January) or only in the Fall?

A. Fall admissions are preferred.

Q. It’s hard to understand the range of graduate programs at ESF – couldn’t it be simplified?

A. It’s true that we offer lots of different ways to carry out doctoral studies: ESF is the only university in the U.S. where all the programs address the environment. Our curricula have been built over time, evolving with the contributions of many different faculty members and Departments on campus. The range of options provides students and faculty a variety of ways to conduct teaching and research for maximal benefit for all.

Q. What’s distinctive about ENRP, relative to other doctoral programs at ESF?
A. ENRP students focus specifically on environmental and natural resource policy, as the name implies, and one of the unique things about ENRP is that it expects students to integrate their policy skill with knowledge in biophysical science (which could include ecology, environmental engineering, forestry, or related technical discipline). The core advising approach in ENRP uses the four box model (detailed in the Handbook) and students are required complete courses in four different areas: (1) biophysical science, (2) policy-related social science, (3) research methods, and (4) advanced natural resource and environmental policy.

* For full details on how ENRP works, see the ENRP Handbook (http://www.esf.edu/environmentalscience/graduate/documents/enrphandbook-2012.pdf).