State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

GRADUATE PROGRAM
IN
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
(GPES)

Doctor of Philosophy
(Ph.D.)
Degree

HANDBOOK

2012 – 2013

Updated: 3/7/13
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I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Graduate Program in Environmental Science (GPES). We are delighted that you have joined a unique set of graduate students, faculty, and researchers who share a deep concern for the development and application of multidisciplinary approaches to the stewardship of our natural and built environments. This handbook is intended as a guide to GPES for both students and faculty. There is additional information on our website (http://www.esf.edu/environmentalscience/graduate), such as a current list of participating faculty.

The State Education Department and SUNY establish policy that applies to all graduate programs. Graduate Policies specific to ESF have been adopted by the College Faculty and are available in the College Catalog (http://www.esf.edu/graduate/policies.htm). Policies that apply specifically to the Ph.D. program are available at www.esf.edu/graduate/phd.htm.

GPES is an interdepartmental program, which distinguishes it from the other graduate programs on campus. Like other programs, GPES has specific policies, procedures, and guidelines, which are detailed in handbooks specific to each degree program.

GPES is organized into Areas of Study formally approved by the ESF Faculty Governance. The Areas are identified on the website: http://www.esf.edu/environmentalscience/graduate/areas.htm. Each Area of Study has at least three active faculty members including a Coordinator. Each GPES student is admitted into one Area of Study. The Area Coordinators, the GPES Graduate Coordinator, and the Director of the Division of Environmental Science make up the GPES Committee, which is responsible for admissions, allocation of graduate fellowships, initial assignment of major professors, curriculum changes, and program administration and assessment.

Students are strongly encouraged to network with their peers and to actively participate in their Areas of Study. A current list of GPES students can be found at: http://www.esf.edu/environmentalscience/graduate/students.asp.
II. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE Ph.D. DEGREE

The Catalog description provides the basic framework of graduation requirements. The student checklist (Appendix A1) will be useful to track your progress through the program. To facilitate detailed program planning and graduation documentation GPES offers a Student Program Check List to track overall progress in the program (Appendix A1). Combined with the Program Administration form (Appendix A2), progress towards degree completion can be assessed. Tracking progress on individual courses and credits completed is facilitated by the Student Course Plan Sheet (Appendix A3). The Student Course Plan Sheet can be used to help complete the College's Form 3B. All College forms are available from the website: http://www.esf.edu/graduate/graddegreq.htm.

Academic Planning

Students will be assigned a Major Professor upon admission. A steering committee should be appointed in the first or second semester of graduate study; this requires you to fill out Form 2A http://www.esf.edu/graduate/documents/form2A.doc. The steering committee consists of the Major Professor and at least two additional faculty members or other qualified persons.

The development of an academic plan is a continuing responsibility of the student, the Major Professor, and the Steering Committee. The planning process ensures adequate preparation for the Doctoral Candidacy Exam and the development and approval of the Dissertation Research Proposal.

Coursework and the Academic Plan

The Doctor of Philosophy degree requires a minimum of 60 graduate credits, of which 30 to 48 credits are for course work and 12 to 30 credits are awarded for dissertation. Individual areas of study will determine the applicable credit hour requirements within these ranges to reflect individual program requirements and emphases. The graduate credits earned for master’s degree that are applicable to a student’s doctoral program of study are determined on an individual basis by the steering committee.

Doctoral Candidacy Examination

The student may request, with the consent of the steering committee, to take the Candidacy exam after completion of 48 graduate credits of coursework (requires form 6B) http://www.esf.edu/graduate/documents/form6B.doc. The purposes of the exam are to assess the critical thinking skills and the depth and breadth of knowledge in Environmental Science in the Area of Study within which the student is enrolled. The form of the exam will be selected by the examination committee following College Policies.
Research Proposal

Doctoral students are required to produce a research proposal, which must be approved and signed by the Steering Committee. Timing for producing the proposal is determined in consultation with the Major Professor. A form for approval is available in the appendix (A4). A copy of the approved proposal is to be filed with the GPES Office.

Dissertation

A minimum of 6 credit hours of research resulting in a document that clearly demonstrates graduate level accomplishments of the student, followed by a defense examination. Guidelines for preparation of the dissertation document can be found on the Graduate web site URL: [http://www.esf.edu/graduate/documents/Format_Guidelines_050312.pdf](http://www.esf.edu/graduate/documents/Format_Guidelines_050312.pdf)

Capstone Seminar

A capstone seminar presenting the dissertation research results to the ESF community is required of all doctoral candidates.

Dissertation Defense Examination

The examination is conducted by the student's Steering Committee and one or more additional Examiners (a total examining committee of five persons), under the supervision of an Examination Chair appointed by the Dean of Instruction and Graduate Studies. Form 5B [http://www.esf.edu/graduate/documents/form5B.docx](http://www.esf.edu/graduate/documents/form5B.docx) must be filed to request a defense examination. It is GPES policy that the defense copy of the dissertation must be delivered to each member of the Defense Committee, including the Chair, at least 14 days prior to the scheduled defense date.

III. RESOURCES

The Graduate Program in Environmental Science has limited staff, facility, and financial resources. Over the past few years we have developed management approaches for their effective and equitable utilization.

A. Graduate Program in Environmental Science (GPES) Office (134 Baker Laboratory)

The GPES Office in 134 Baker Laboratory maintains files of student records, job and research announcements, course syllabi, and internship requests. The collection of GPES Theses, Dissertations, Research Proposals, and Internship Reports housed there are available for reference.

Most students at some time during their studies encounter problems of a personal or academic nature for which they require assistance. An early discussion of the situation and options is often the key to their resolution. Major Professors and the GPES Coordinator are all available to facilitate this process.
B. GPES Mailboxes

Although email is the primary mechanism for internal College and Faculty communications, mailboxes provide additional means. Students should make it a practice to visit their mailbox at least once a week outside the office at 134 Baker. The mailboxes should not be used to receive U.S. Mail, and the GPES Office Staff cannot receive personal phone messages for students. Students have an additional mailbox which is located with the mailboxes for your major professor’s home department.

C. Office Space

It has been the general practice of the College that graduate students are provided with a desk space as available. Students working as graduate assistants or as research assistants have priority for desk space. Because of limited facilities and the flux of students in residence, the assignment of such space usually takes a few weeks each fall. Students should first ask for space available from their major professor. Office space for GPES students is allocated by the major professor’s home department and is not guaranteed.

D. Funding

Graduate Assistantships (GA’s) are assigned in support of teaching and are awarded in the spring of each year for the following academic year. In 2012-2013, GPES had 12 semester positions for its approximately 100 graduate students. Each spring, students who will be returning in the fall are notified by the GPES Coordinator of the projected GA allocation and are invited to apply. Applications from incoming students are also included in the selection process. The GPES Committee prioritizes the applications for administrative action.

As a graduate-research college, ESF is involved in numerous externally funded projects most of which involve graduate research assistantships (RAs). Each project is managed by a Principal Investigator who has the responsibility of selecting staff. GPES has no direct involvement in this process. Students interested in RAs should discuss opportunities with their Major Professor. Throughout the year the Graduate Office and Research Office circulate research, fellowship, and internship announcements. Students should periodically check their mailboxes, the appropriate Environmental Science folders, and the Environmental Science bulletin board.

The Edna Bailey Sussman Fund (URL: http://www.esf.edu/sussman/) provides stipends to support graduate student summer internship experiences. The Fund has supported approximately 12 ESF students per year, about one-quarter of who have been GPES students. Sussman supports a broad range of interest areas, from environmental policy, regulation and communication to various environmental sciences. Sussman applications are treated competitively; awards are usually in the range of $4,800 for full-time internship employment. Applications must be filed by the annual application deadline, usually in early March. Awards are announced in early May. Proposal guidelines are available in February from the Office of Instruction and Graduate Studies located in 227 Bray.
### Appendix A1. Student program checklist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Propose steering committee [Memo to Office of Instruction and Graduate Studies (OIGS)]</td>
<td>Major Prof. (in consultation with student)</td>
<td>First semester</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Meet with steering committee to review progress and submit a written report to Graduate Coordinator Ruth Yanai</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Meet with steering committee to discuss preliminary exam (optional)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Complete preliminary exam (if required by committee)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Meet with Major Prof. and steering committee to determine appropriate coursework (Form 3B with “Plan Sheet” to OIGS)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Request appointment of doctoral candidacy examining committee (Form 6B to OIGS)</td>
<td>Student (Major Prof.)</td>
<td>At least 4 weeks before proposed exam date</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Meet with examination committee to schedule candidacy exam (Form 6D to OIGS; chair submits Form 6E to OIGS)</td>
<td>Student (chair)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Complete candidacy exam (Form 6F to OIGS)</td>
<td>Student (chair)</td>
<td>Minimum 1 year before dissertation defense</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Prepare detailed proposal for dissertation research</td>
<td>Student (in consultation with Major Prof. &amp; steering committee)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Meet with Major Prof. &amp; steering committee to review research proposal. Copy final proposal to Major Prof. &amp; steering committee</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Submit draft of dissertation to Major Prof. for review, then to Steering Committee</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>As appropriate for projected defense date</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Request appointment of examining committee and committee chair (Form 5B through Ruth Yanai to OIGS)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>At least 1 month before proposed defense date</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Present Capstone Seminar</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Before defense</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Schedule defense date with committee (including committee chair) and notify OIGS</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>After Major Prof. approves draft dissertation</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Submit dissertation and abstract in final form to examining committee</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>14 days before scheduled defense date</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Defend dissertation (Form 5E to OIGS)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>As scheduled</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Submit corrected dissertation and abstract to Major Prof. &amp; defense Chair for final approval and signing</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>As scheduled at defense</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Submit dissertation to Ruth Yanai for approval and signing</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Before graduation</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Submit copies of dissertation and abstract to OIGS for signature and binding</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Before graduation</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Certify completion of all requirements (Form 9 through Grad Coordinator Ruth Yanai to OIGS)</td>
<td>Major Prof.</td>
<td>Before graduation</td>
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Appendix A2
Program Administration

Student: ____________________________ Semester Entered: ________________


Address: ___________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Phone: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________

Deficiencies: ____________________________ Semester Remedied: ________________

________________________________________________________________________

Administrative Requirements Completed:

3B Form [ ] Yes Date: ________________

Dissertation/Internship Proposal: [ ] Yes Date: ________________

Title: ___________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Steering Committee:

1) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

2) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

3) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

4) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

Examiners (M.S., Ph.D. only):

1) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

2) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

3) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

4) ___________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

Defense/Exam Chair (M.S., Ph.D. only):

________________________________________________________________________ Phone ____________________________

Capstone Seminar: [ ] Yes Date: ________________ Time and Location: ________________

TA/RAs Held:

Semester: ________________ Course/Project: ____________________________ Supervisor: ____________________________

Semester: ________________ Course/Project: ____________________________ Supervisor: ____________________________

Semester: ________________ Course/Project: ____________________________ Supervisor: ____________________________

Semester: ________________ Course/Project: ____________________________ Supervisor: ____________________________

Semester: ________________ Course/Project: ____________________________ Supervisor: ____________________________

Semester: ________________ Course/Project: ____________________________ Supervisor: ____________________________
Appendix A3
Student Course Plan Sheet

Student: ___________________________ Semester Entered: _______________________
Phone: ___________________________ Email: _______________________
Area: ____________________________

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Appendix A4
Graduate Program in Environmental Science
Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal Approval Form

Approval of Proposals

Students are required to prepare a Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal. This proposal must be formally approved by the student's Major Professor and Steering Committee using this form (below) for signatures with a copy of the proposal attached.

Although progress in developing a proposal may vary from student to student, students are normally required to produce an approved proposal before registering for more than 3 credits of ENS 999 Dissertation Research.

Content of Proposals

Proposals will vary in content according to the nature of the planned research. In general, these should be succinct statements of research plans, normally about 10 pages in length, describing the planned work as follows:

1. Tentative title.
2. Research objective or hypothesis.
4. Key data or information sources.
5. Method of analysis.
6. Expected results.
7. Timetable for research, writing, and defense examination.
8. Brief bibliography.

PROPOSAL APPROVAL

Student Name: ________________________________________________________________

Dissertation Title: ______________________________________________________________

Approved:

Major Professor ________________________________ Date __________________________
Committee Member ______________________________ Date __________________________
Committee Member ______________________________ Date __________________________
Committee Member ______________________________ Date __________________________

A copy of the approved proposal should be affixed to this form, and copies of this document with attached proposal should be provided to each of the above signers, and to the Graduate Program in Environmental Science (GPES) Office, 134 Baker Laboratory. At least two committee members are required.