

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE (GPES)

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The [Graduate Program in Environmental Science \(GPES\)](#) supports interdisciplinary environmental research and teaching at SUNY ESF and offers unique graduate programs that serve the needs

of our students. GPES is comprised of faculty from each of the seven departments at SUNY ESF who understand the importance of interdisciplinary collaborations to manage and solve critical environmental problems. GPES is centered on three Research Areas: (i) Climate and Energy (CE); (ii) Ecosystems: Land, Water and Air (ELWA); and (iii) Policy, Planning, Communication & Society (PPCS). Research Areas are designed to group faculty around broad research and teaching themes. Prospective students identify potential Major Professors within one of these Research Areas when applying to the program.

Requirements

GPES offers Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Master of Science (MS), and Master of Professional Studies (MPS) degree programs. Each of these degree programs is briefly described below. Note that GPES has minimal course requirements which allow students to design a program that satisfies their research and professional needs. The minimal requirements for all GPES degrees (described below) are one social science/policy course, one natural or physical science course, one methods/tools course, and the GPES Orientation seminar. This contributes to a multidisciplinary foundation and allows students, working with their major professor, to design a program that fits their research and professional needs.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

The PhD degree is a research focused degree program. The PhD degree requires a minimum of 60 graduate credits, of which 30 to 48 credits are coursework and 12 to 30 credits are for the PhD dissertation. Credit hour requirements within these ranges are developed in consultation with a student's steering committee. Graduate credits earned for a previous master's degree program that are applicable to a student's doctoral program of study are determined on an individual basis by the student's steering committee.

In consultation with their steering committee, a student may request to take the PhD Candidacy exam after completion of a majority of their graduate coursework. The purposes of the exam are to assess the student's depth and breadth of knowledge in Environmental Science and their understanding of the scientific process. The PhD degree culminates in a PhD dissertation a public capstone seminar presentation, and a PhD defense involving the candidate's steering committee.

Master of Science (M.S.)

The MS degree is a research focused degree program combining both coursework and a research experience. The MS degree requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits, of which 18 to 24 credits

are coursework and 6 to 12 credits are thesis credits. Credit hour requirements within these ranges are developed in consultation with your thesis committee. The M.S. degree culminates in a M.S. thesis, a public capstone seminar presentation, and a M.S. defense involving the candidate's steering committee members.

Concurrent Degree

Some students may elect to pursue multiple graduate degrees concurrently. Student's in concurrent degree programs may "double count" 8 credit hours toward their M.S. degree.

Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.)

The MPS degree is aimed at professional applications of environmental knowledge, allowing students to develop skills to aid their professional development. The MPS degree is focused on coursework rather than research. It is a non-thesis degree program that involves either an internship or a synthesis paper focused on the student's professional interests. The MPS degree requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits, of which 24 to 27 credits are coursework and 3 to 6 credits are for either an internship or synthesis experience. Applicants with a minimum of three (3) years of post-baccalaureate full-time professional experience directly related to the intended area of study may petition for 6 credit hours of advanced standing in the program.

Synthesis Requirements

Students select either an internship (3 to 6 credit hours) or prepare a synthesis paper (3 to 6 credit hours). All students must present a capstone seminar in their final semester and submit a written Capstone report documenting their research or internship experience. The length, depth, and format of the report is at the discretion of the student's supervisory committee.

Concurrent Degree

Concurrent degree students may "double-count" 8 credit hours toward their MPS degree.