



State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
The Graduate School

Doctoral Student Guidelines for Filing Graduate Program of Study (3B Form)

Your program of study must include the sequence of courses you must complete and a plan for your research. The program of study, developed by you with the advice and approval of your major professor and other members of your steering committee, must be submitted to your Department Chair for approval, and then forwarded to the Graduate School at least by the end of your third semester. This program of study can be changed during the course of your studies via petition, Form 4, or online through the student portal. Changes must be approved by the major professor, Department Chair, and the Graduate School.

The following summarizes the program requirements which must be completed before a graduate degree will be awarded:

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

General Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is an academic degree offered in the following degree programs: Environmental and Forest Chemistry, Environmental and Forest Biology, Forest Resources Management, Environmental and Resource Engineering, and Environmental Science. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree requires a minimum of 60 graduate credits, of which 30 to 48 credits are for coursework and 12 to 30 credits are awarded for thesis. Individual departments will determine the applicable credit hour requirements within these ranges to reflect individual program requirements and emphases. The graduate credits earned for a Master's Degree that are applicable to a student's doctoral study plan are determined on an individual basis by the steering committee. The student must pass the doctoral candidacy examination covering selected fields of study at least one year prior to dissertation defense, and successfully defend the dissertation. The dissertation must be prepared according to College standards and will be deposited in Moon Memorial Library.

Doctoral Preliminary Examination

The requirement for this examination is determined by individual departments. The purpose of this examination is to assess the entering student's basic knowledge in the chosen field of study. The results of this examination may be used to determine the student's suitability for the doctoral program and as a guide in selecting coursework and developing a program of study.

Tool Requirements

Doctoral students must demonstrate competence in at least one research tool as a requirement for graduation. Such tools include statistics, computer science, or the ability to translate technical articles in a language other than English commonly used in science. Tool requirements and standards for each doctorate program will be determined by the corresponding program department.

Communication Skills

All students entering graduate programs at ESF are expected to be proficient in communication skills, including technical writing and library skills. Students are required to have completed at least one course in technical writing and one course in library usage, either as an undergraduate or as a graduate student. Credits for such courses taken during the graduate program are not counted towards degree requirements. Alternatively, graduate students can meet the requirement by demonstrating the equivalent in experience in writing and library skills, as determined by the steering committee.

Seminars

Participation in seminars, including the preparation and presentation of technical material, is vital to the student's graduate education. All graduate students at ESF are required to participate in graduate seminars, as follows:

Each graduate student is expected to participate in topic seminars, including presentations, as determined by the individual department. This requirement can be fulfilled, with appropriate approval, by seminars offered at Syracuse University or the SUNY Health Sciences Center.

Students completing the Ph.D. degree are required to present a "capstone seminar" on their dissertation. The purpose of the capstone seminar is to provide an opportunity for the graduate student to present technical information to a critical body of professionals and peers. This seminar will be presented prior to the dissertation defense and should be attended by the student's steering committee. Each seminar is open to the College community and will be announced College-wide to encourage attendance by students and faculty.

Academic Performance

All graduate students are required to maintain at least a 3.000 cumulative grade point average (4.000 =A) for graduate level courses. Students who do not maintain this average, or who receive two or more grades of Unsatisfactory (U) for work on the dissertation, will be placed on probation or suspended from ESF by the Dean of Instruction and Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the College Subcommittee on Academic Standards.

Credit Hour Load

To meet academic requirements, graduate students must be registered for at least one credit each semester, excluding summers, from the first semester of matriculation until all degree requirements have been completed. Failure to register for each semester will result in the student being withdrawn from graduate study and, if the student wishes to return in the future, a new application must be filed and reviewed prior to readmission. Audited courses may not be used to satisfy full-time status. Students are required to register for at least one credit of thesis/dissertation research, professional experience, or independent study in the summer if they will complete all requirements during that time. There is no full-time credit-hour load to meet academic requirements.

Graduate students who hold an assistantship and/or a tuition scholarship must be in full-time status each semester while holding such an award. Registration for nine credits usually equates to full-time status for a student holding an assistantship. Graduate students not holding an assistantship are considered full-time if they are registered for at least 12 credits each semester.

Doctoral candidates (i.e., those who have successfully completed their doctoral candidacy examination), master's students (M.F., M.P.S., M.L.A. and M.F.) who have met all academic requirements, and master of science (M.S.) students who have requested the appointment of a defense committee and intend to defend a thesis may be considered full time if registered for at least one credit of thesis/dissertation research, professional experience, or independent study and submit a "Request for Full-time Certification Form" to the Graduate School.

Transfer Credit

Credit hours appropriate to the graduate degree in which a minimum grade of B was earned from an accredited institution can be transferred to the college, but grades and grade points cannot be transferred.

Up to six credits of graduate coursework **not used to complete another degree** may be accepted toward completion of a master's or doctoral degree as approved by the steering committee.

Up to thirty credits of graduate level coursework **earned as part of a conferred master's degree** may be transferred (by petition) to a doctoral degree with approval of the steering committee.

Students may transfer no more than nine credits of credit-bearing **non-degree ESF** coursework to graduate degree programs.

All transfer credit will remain tentative until official, final transcripts are received. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that official, final transcripts are sent to and received by the college.

Time Limits

For the doctoral degree, students must complete the candidacy exam within three years of the first date of matriculation. Doctoral candidates must complete all degree requirements within three years of passing the doctoral candidacy examination, or they will be required to retake the candidacy examination.

Updated: 10/5/2022