



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

TO: Students in the Master of Science (M.S.) degree program

FROM: The Graduate School

SUBJECT: Graduate Student Program of Study (Form 3B)

The Graduate Program of Study is, in its simplest sense, a list of courses and competencies comprising the required elements of the particular degree program. It is unique to each graduate student and serves as both a “plan” which lays out the intended array of courses and research needed to achieve their educational goals, as well as a “contract” with the college specifying each of the required courses, credit hours, experiences (such as seminars or internships), examinations, thesis or dissertation documents, and skill or knowledge requirements necessary to complete the degree.

Your program of study must include the sequence of courses you must complete and a plan for 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. The Program of Study should be developed during the first semester of study in the graduate program and should be filed with the Graduate School no later than the end of the second semester of matriculation. The program of study is not inflexible; it can and often is revised during the course of graduate studies. Changes to the program of study must be approved by your major professor, Department Chair, and the Dean of the Graduate School and may be formalized either by use of a “Petition to the Faculty” form, or by resubmitting a new or revised Form 3B.

The following summarizes the minimum program requirements which must be completed before a graduate degree will be awarded for the Master of Science:

The Master of Science (M.S.) degree is an academic degree offered in the following programs: environmental and forest chemistry, environmental and forest biology, forest resources management, environmental and resource engineering, environmental science, environmental studies, and landscape architecture.

To complete this degree, in addition to completion of necessary coursework, students must investigate a problem that initiates, expands, or clarifies knowledge in the field and prepare a thesis based on this study. Students are required to define an appropriate problem for investigation; review relevant information; develop a study plan incorporating investigative techniques appropriate to the problem; implement the plan; and relate the results to theory or a body of knowledge in the field.

The minimum credit-hour requirement is the successful completion of 30 graduate credits distributed between coursework and thesis. The applicable distributions will be determined by individual departments to suit program objectives, with the understanding that a minimum of 18 credits is awarded for graduate-level coursework and a minimum of six credits is awarded for the thesis. All steering committee members should sign the student’s program of study (Form 3B) by the end of the second semester of matriculation. The student must successfully defend the thesis for degree completion. The thesis must be prepared and bound according to college standards and submitted to ProQuest for electronic publication on-line.

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 experience in writing and library skills, as determined by the steering committee, and filing an appropriate "petition to the faculty" form in the Graduate School requesting a waiver of these requirements.

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 seminar(s), including presentations, as determined by the individual department (CHE: 1; EFB: 3; ES: 1; GPES: 1; LA: 1; FNRM: 2; PBE: 1; CMWPE: 1; ERFEG: 1). This requirement can be fulfilled, with appropriate approval, by seminars offered at Syracuse University or the SUNY Health Sciences Center. Notation should be made on Form 3B specifying which courses fulfill the topic seminar requirements.

Students completing the master's degree are also required to present a "capstone seminar" on their thesis. 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 thesis 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 thesis or project, will be placed on probation or suspended from ESF by the Dean of the Graduate School 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, reviewed, and acceptance granted prior to readmission. 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.

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. *To maintain valid F-1 or J-1 student status in compliance with SEVIS, international students are required to maintain the institutional equivalent of full-time enrollment status during all required academic semesters.* Audited courses may not be used to satisfy full-time status. Undergraduate courses may not be used to satisfy full-time status requirements for federal and state financial aid (TAP) but may be applied toward full-time status requirements for SEVIS.

Master's students (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 degree as approved by 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 by the ESF Registrar, accompanied by a "petition to the faculty" form specifying the courses and credits to be transferred, and corresponding to the those listed on Form 3B. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that official, final transcripts are sent to and received by the college.

Time Limits

Graduate students must complete all requirements for the master's degree within three years of the first date of matriculation. To continue the graduate degree program beyond three years, the delimitation date must be extended by filing a "petition to the faculty" form in the Graduate School.

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