

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, MASTER OF (M.ENVS.), ACCELERATED BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (B.S.) TO MASTER'S

Program goal

The goal of the Master of Environmental Studies (M.Envs.) degree program is to provide an interdisciplinary master's degree program in environmental studies that emphasizes the critical links between environmental life sciences and public policy. This goal necessitates training that crosses disciplinary boundaries. Through a program of study combining environmental science, environmental technology and environmental policy, the successful graduate will gain a range of skills designed to facilitate a science-based understanding of the natural world and human interactions with it. The M.Envs. is specifically designed to provide students with professional training to prepare them for careers involving leadership in environmental science and policy.

Student learning outcomes

1. Graduates will be able to use emerging environmental technologies and apply them under real-world conditions.
2. Graduates will be able to conduct objective research and/or interpret research findings, and apply scientific concepts and information to the decision-making process for environmental regulations and policies.
3. Graduates will be able to effectively bridge the realms of policy and science on critical environmental issues and be able to make significant contributions in an interdisciplinary professional and academic environment.
4. Graduates will possess a sophisticated and practical understanding of methods for collection, analysis, presentation and critical interpretation of environmental data using appropriate statistical and quantitative tools.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/>) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the **academic regulations section** for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/>)

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the **academic regulations section** for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy/>)

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the **academic regulations section** for additional information on graduation requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>)

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (<http://graduate.admissions.vcu.edu>).

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.Envs. (non-thesis degree)	Fall		TOEFL required for international students
	Spring		
	Summer		

The accelerated Bachelor of Science and Master of Environmental Studies is restricted to students who have demonstrated strong interest and success in environmental studies. The minimum qualification for admittance to the program is the completion of 90 undergraduate credit hours with an overall GPA of 3.0 and a GPA of 3.3 in the environmental studies major concentration. Students also are required to provide a letter of recommendation from at least one of their major professors attesting to their interest and competence in environmental studies.

Students may apply to the accelerated program after completing a total of 70 credit hours, either by transfer or VCU completion. Students begin accelerated graduate classes after completing a total of 90 undergraduate credits, either by transfer or VCU completion.

Special admission requirements

Students failing to meet the minimum standards for admission to the accelerated program due to exceptional circumstances will be allowed to appeal to the environmental studies graduate admissions committee for special admission. However, under no circumstances will students who fail to meet the graduate student standards of performance outlined in the Graduate Bulletin be admitted to the accelerated program.

The environmental studies undergraduate and graduate studies program directors jointly will provide guidance for students who are accepted into the accelerated program. This guidance will include a review of all of the program degree requirements, both graduate and undergraduate, and the development of an appropriate plan of study.

Degree requirements

The requirements for the B.S. in Environmental Studies and the Master of Environmental Studies are not reduced by the accelerated program. However, 12 credit hours of graduate course work may be applied toward both degrees for qualified students in the program.

Refer to the VCU Undergraduate Bulletin for a complete listing of requirements for the B.S. in Environmental Studies (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/vcu-life-sciences/center-environmental-studies/environmental-studies-bs/#degreerequirementstext>) degree program. The following table outlines the undergraduate requirements that would be fulfilled by the corresponding graduate courses. Where special circumstances exist (e.g., student has already completed a fulfilled course prior to applying to the accelerated program), another undergraduate requirement may be fulfilled by the listed graduate course with the approval of both the graduate and undergraduate program directors.

Shared credits

Shared graduate class	Undergraduate requirements fulfilled	Credits
ENVS 550 or ENVS 670	ENVS 330	3
ENVS 601	SOCY 320/POLI 320	3
ENVS elective (approved graduate electives; see table below)	ENVS elective	3
STAT 543	STAT 314	3

Total number of shared graduate credit hours: 12

Approved graduate electives

Course	Title	Hours
ENVS/URSP 521	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems	3
ENVS 591 or ENVS 691	Topics in Environmental Studies	1-3
ENVS 602	Environmental Technology	1-3
ENVS/PADM 628	Environmental Policy and Administration	3

Following the completion of the undergraduate requirements, the student may complete the master's degree within one year. The recommended approach would be to complete the hands-on component of the degree (internship or independent study) during the summer following completion of the undergraduate requirements. All additional requirements could then be completed in two nine-hour semesters.

However, students may also opt to postpone the hands-on component of the degree until the summer following the completion of all graduate course work.

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), students must:

1. Complete a minimum of 33 graduate credit hours, approved by the program director, with an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 on all graduate course work attempted after acceptance into the program (At least one-half of required course work must be at the 600 level or higher.)
2. Complete three required core courses (9 credit hours)
3. Complete an additional 21 credit hours of approved graduate electives
4. Complete 3 credit hours of practical experience (either 3 credit hours of internship or independent study)
5. Successfully complete a comprehensive oral examination administered by three faculty members

Curriculum requirements

Core requirements

Course	Title	Hours
ENVS 601	Survey in Environmental Studies	3
ENVS 603	Environmental Research Methods	3
STAT 543	Statistical Methods I	3
Practical experience		
Select three credit hours from the following: ¹		3
ENVS 692	Independent Study	
ENVS 693	Internship in Environmental Studies	
Select courses from electives list below ²		21
Total Hours		33

¹Students may not apply more than a total of three credits of ENVS 692 and/or ENVS 693 to the degree without prior approval of the major adviser and program director.

²Courses must represent at least two of the disciplines below. Listed courses are options and are not comprehensive of all electives. Other electives may be allowed with prior permission of major adviser and program director.

Electives

Course	Title	Hours
Environmental studies		
ENVS 550	Ecological Risk Assessment	3
ENVS/ANTH 556	Historical and Cultural Landscapes	3
ENVS 692	Independent Study	1-3
ENVS 693	Internship in Environmental Studies	1-3
Environmental policy and administration		
ENVS/PADM 628	Environmental Policy and Administration	3
ENVS/GVPA 640	River Policy	3
ENVS 660	Virginia Environmental Law	3
PADM 601	Principles of Public Administration	3
URSP 650	Natural Resources and Environmental Planning	3
URSP 652	Environmental Analysis	3

Environmental science/health

BIOL 510	Conservation Biology	3
BIOL 514	Stream Ecology	4
BIOL 532	Water Pollution Biology	3
BIOL 591	Special Topics in Biology (applied and environmental microbiology)	1-4
ENVS 650	Pesticides, Health and the Environment	3
ENVS 655	Hydrogeology	3
ENVS 670	Pollution Physiology	3

Environmental technology

ENVS/URSP 521	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems	3
ENVS 602	Environmental Technology	1-3
ENVS/URSP 654	Environmental Remote Sensing	3
ENVS 691	Topics in Environmental Studies (environmental applications of GIS)	1-3

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required is 33.

Graduate program director

Stephen P. McIninch, Ph.D.

Professor, Center for Environmental Studies

spmcinin@vcu.edu

(804) 828-7202

Program website: vcu.edu/cesweb (<http://vcu.edu/cesweb/>)