

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, MASTER OF (M.ENVS.)

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

- Multidisciplinary content:** Graduates will acquire foundational knowledge from a broad range of disciplines that are directly relevant to environmental science and policy with particular emphasis on earth sciences ecology and environmental policy.
- Environmental data and technology:** Graduates will master cutting-edge skills in data collection management and analysis. Special emphasis will be placed on geographic information systems and the R programming language.
- Application and communication:** Graduates will develop a novel application to showcase their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Relevant examples may include a thesis project and publication, delivery of a technical report or database to a state agency partner, or a multimedia collaboration with the Science Museum of Virginia.

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.](https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/) (<https://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.](https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy/) (<https://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.](https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/) (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>)

Apply online today. (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>)

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.Envs. (non-thesis degree)	Fall	Feb 1	TOEFL for international students
	Spring	Aug 15	

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>), applicants must have successfully completed undergraduate training and hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution reflecting ability to perform at the graduate level.

While qualified students from any baccalaureate program will be considered for admission to the M.S., due to the program goal of linking science and policy, students with narrow training in one field or the other may be required to complete some basic education in the alternate field prior to full admission.

Students admitted to the program are generally drawn from applicants with a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale or equivalent). Applicants holding an undergraduate degree from recognized foreign institutions should display an acceptable level of English proficiency by achieving a minimum score of 600 on the TOEFL paper-based examination or 100 on the Internet-based examination.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<https://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 four required core courses (12 credit hours)
3. Complete an additional 18 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

Course	Title	Hours
Core requirements		
ENVS 521	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems	3
ENVS 543	Environmental Data Literacy	3
ENVS 601	Survey in Environmental Studies	3
ENVS 603	Environmental Research Methods	3
Practical experience		
Select three credit hours from the following: ¹		3
ENVS 692	Independent Study	
ENVS 693	Internship in Environmental Studies	
Electives		
Select courses from electives list below ²		18
Total Hours		33

1

Students 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.

2

Courses 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 660	Environmental Law	3
PADM 601	Introduction to Public Service and 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 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 number of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 33.

Accelerated opportunities

The center offers opportunities for qualified undergraduate students to earn both an undergraduate and graduate degree in a minimum of five years by completing approved graduate courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. See the program page in the Undergraduate Bulletin (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/vcu-life-sciences/center-environmental-studies/environmental-studies-bs/#acceleratedbsandmenvstext>) for details.

Contact

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Program website: ces.vcu.edu (<https://ces.vcu.edu>)