

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE GRADUATE MAJOR

GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT

Overview

The Environmental Science Graduate Major provides training and research opportunities leading to the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Environmental Science. Faculty from the colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Engineering, and Liberal Arts and Sciences cooperate to offer courses and research opportunities covering a broad array of environmental topics. The program emphasizes fundamental concepts and research which at the same time address major environmental issues. The curriculum is designed to provide the interdisciplinary approach needed in Environmental Science education and research, while allowing flexibility in designing individual programs of study. In addition to work in their chosen area of specialization, students are afforded a broad exposure to the biological, chemical, and physical aspects of environmental systems and the specialized training necessary for integrated analysis of these systems.

Graduate students majoring in Environmental Science choose a major professor from the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty of the cooperating departments and cannot be admitted to the Environmental Science program until both the program and the home department have approved their applications. The Environmental Science program sets the *academic* requirements for the major, but for administrative purposes students are normally served by their home department.

Cooperating Departments

The interdepartmental program sets *academic* requirements for students majoring in Environmental Science and is responsible for approving POS committees, administering exams and approving graduate college forms (e.g. the DOGE of Environmental Science signs POS forms and graduation slips). The home departments are expected to provide office space and other administrative support such as mailboxes, access to support staff, and assistance with payroll and appointment actions. In addition, Environmental Science students should have equitable access to other forms of discretionary departmental support – RAs, TAs, and travel and research funds. Because departments and faculty members differ in the resources available for their graduate students, Environmental Science students will not all have identical space, stipend support, etc. However, it is important that Environmental Science majors feel that they are valued members of their home department and that the department is committed to their success.

Departments wishing to join the major must submit a written application to the Chair of the Environmental Science Graduate Major. After reviewing the application, the Environmental Science Graduate Major Supervisory Committee will provide a recommendation and distribute confidential ballots to the Environmental Science Core Faculty. Approval requires a simple majority of the ballots cast by the Environmental Science Core Faculty.

Cooperating departments currently include the departments of

- Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering
- Agronomy

- Animal Science
- Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering
- Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology
- Food Science and Human Nutrition
- Geological and Atmospheric Sciences
- Horticulture
- Natural Resources Ecology and Management

Administration

The program is administered by the Chair of the Environmental Science Graduate Major and by the Environmental Science Graduate Major Supervisory Committee. The chair and supervisory committee members are elected for three year terms by a vote of the Environmental Science Core Faculty. Any member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty is eligible to serve as chair or as a member of the supervisory committee.

Program Chair

The program chair serves as the Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) for the major and is the primary liaison between the program and university administrators. The chair is responsible for all matters regarding official actions of the graduate program (POS forms, graduation forms, etc.), supervising office staff, managing the program budget, and insuring that inquiries about the program are answered. The chair is responsible for calling and chairing a meeting of the Environmental Science graduate faculty at least once a year and for chairing the Environmental Science Graduate Major Supervisory Committee. The chair is also responsible for soliciting nominations to fill any vacancies on committees.

Supervisory Committee

The Supervisory Committee is responsible for setting program policies and supervision of program activities including but not limited to supervision and coordination of Environmental Science course offerings, recruitment and admission of graduate students, evaluation of programs of study, and revision of the curriculum and course offerings. Supervisory committee members serve as representatives of the Environmental Science Faculty, whose approval must be sought for any major changes. The supervisory committee consists of the program chair, four faculty elected at large by the Environmental Science Core Faculty and one *ex officio* student member appointed by the supervisory committee.

Admissions Committee

The Environmental Science Graduate Admissions Committee consists of four Environmental Science Graduate Faculty appointed by the supervisory committee. Members of the admissions committee typically serve no more than three consecutive years. The committee members select their own chairperson. All four members including the committee chair are expected to vote on issues before the committee. The chair of the admissions committee is responsible for coordinating the committee's activities in a timely and fair manner. The admissions committee is responsible for insuring the students admitted to the program meet minimum requirements, have

an academic supervisor who is a member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty, and a plan for financial support.

The Graduate Admissions Committee will review each complete application received and ensure that files are made available to the faculty. The Graduate Admissions Committee will recommend to the DOGE those applicants who should be offered admission, and will rank applicants for any assistantships awarded by the Environmental Science Graduate Program. The DOGE shall submit these to the Supervisory Committee for final approval. The Supervisory Committee has final authority over admissions and assistantships awarded by the graduate program. It is anticipated that most issues before the admissions committee will be resolved by consensus but the Supervisory Committee can resolve any issue over which the Admissions Committee is deadlocked. Any faculty member may petition the Supervisory Committee to reconsider a recommendation of the Admissions Committee with respect to admission or ranking of applicants for assistantships awarded by the graduate program.

Seminar Committee

The Environmental Science Graduate Seminar Committee consists of three Environmental Science Graduate Faculty appointed by the supervisory committee. The committee members select their own chairperson. The chair of the seminar committee is responsible for coordinating the committee's activities in a timely and fair manner. The seminar committee is responsible for organizing and managing *EnSci 690: Seminar in Environmental Science*.

Elections

The Chair of the Environmental Science Graduate Major and members of the Environmental Science Graduate Major Supervisory Committee are normally elected for three-year terms, with eligibility for reelection any number of times. In the last semester of the term for any elected position, the Supervisory Committee shall solicit nominations from each department. Any member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty may forward one or more nominations, including self-nominations, to the Supervisory Committee. In all cases, nominators must determine that a nominee is willing to serve before nominating someone for the position. The Supervisory Committee shall prepare a voting ballot that is distributed to the Environmental Science Core Faculty. Election is by simple majority of the votes cast in a valid ballot. At least 51% of the Core Faculty must vote for the ballot to be valid. Actively entered abstentions count toward the quorum but do not count as votes cast in tabulating the outcome. If no candidate for a specified position receives a majority, a runoff election of the two candidates receiving the most votes shall be held. The result of the election for Chair of the major shall be forwarded to the Graduate College for confirmation. (Initially the Supervisory Committee may set the terms of committee members at two to four years, in order to achieve a staggered rotation of members on the committee.)

Environmental Science Graduate Faculty

The Environmental Science graduate program recognizes two levels of faculty participation and service among the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty:

- 1) Affiliate Faculty and
- 2) Core Faculty.

Environmental Science Affiliate Faculty

Any faculty member in a Cooperating Department may apply for Affiliate membership in the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty by application to the Chair of the Environmental Science Graduate Major and a vote by the Environmental Science Core Faculty (defined below).

Applications for membership must include a current curriculum vitae and a written statement indicating the reasons for seeking faculty membership and confirming a commitment to actively participate in program activities and to recruit and train students in the major. The Supervisory Committee will review each application and distribute appropriate materials to the Environmental Science Core Faculty for consideration, with or without a recommendation. The Supervisory Committee will also arrange for a confidential vote by the Core Faculty.

Approval requires a simple majority of the votes cast in a valid ballot. At least 51% of the Core Faculty must vote for the ballot to be valid. Actively entered abstentions count toward the quorum but do not count as votes cast in tabulating the outcome. The chair will inform the applicant of the outcome.

The criteria for evaluating membership on the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty are as follows:

1. A publication record demonstrating accomplishment in the field of Environmental Science,
2. An active, high quality research program involving Environmental Science,
3. A commitment to recruit, support, and train students majoring in Environmental Science,
4. A commitment to interdisciplinary training and willingness to participate actively in the activities of the Environmental Science Program, and
5. A commitment from the faculty member's department to serve as a cooperating, administrative department for Environmental Science majors.

Environmental Science Core Faculty

The Environmental Science Core Faculty are all members of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty who have either:

- 1) served on a standing committee in the Environmental Science Graduate Program within the preceding 3 academic years, or
- 2) served as chair of an Environmental Science POS committee within the preceding 3 academic years.

Affiliate Faculty automatically become Core Faculty when they fulfill either of these qualifications. Likewise, Core Faculty return to Affiliate status when 3 years have elapsed since chairing an Environmental Science POS committee or being a member of a standing committee.

Affiliate Faculty are asked to stand for renewal of their Affiliate Status every 3 years, following the membership application procedures outlined above.

The program office is responsible for maintaining records relating to faculty status and for informing faculty members of changes in status. Coincident with any change in status, faculty shall be asked to confirm

1. their desire to continue as a member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty,
2. their commitment to recruit, support, and train students majoring in Environmental Science, and
3. their willingness to participate actively in the activities of the Environmental Science Program.

Information disseminated to the Core Faculty or Affiliate Faculty as a group shall be sent to all members of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty. This includes for example information related to graduate applications, committee membership, governance, and curriculum.

Program of Study Committees

The chair or co-chair of the POS committee for every student obtaining a major or co-major in Environmental Science must be a member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty. All Environmental Science Graduate Faculty are authorized to chair Program of Study committees for students majoring in Environmental Science, within the restrictions pertaining to full or term membership on the ISU Graduate Faculty. POS committees of students obtaining a Ph.D. in Environmental Science must include at least three members of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty, including the major professor. POS committees for master's programs must include at least two members of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty, including the major professor. A member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty can serve as the sole major professor for students who choose to co-major in Environmental Science, provided that faculty member is also a member of the faculty in the co-major outside of Environmental Science. POS committees should normally include Environmental Science Graduate Faculty from at least two departments.

Admission Procedures

Information for prospective students, instructions for submitting applications, and links to the on-line application system are supplied on the Environmental Science website - <https://enscigrad.iastate.edu/admissions/>.

A summary spreadsheet, including information about each applicant's record (previous schools, GPA, GRE, research interests, etc.) is created and routed to all Environmental Science Graduate Faculty by the Environmental Science Graduate Program Coordinator. This summary is intended to alert faculty to any applicants whom they might be interested in training, as well as to inform faculty of the nature of the applicant pool. Applications may be viewed electronically through Cybox. Faculty may request the Admissions Committee to initiate committee review of a given applicant.

Students in Environmental Science must also be admitted to a home department that is among those participating in the program. Because interdepartmental graduate majors are full members of the graduate student body of the home department, the admission policy for interdepartmental graduate majors into the home department is determined by that department.

The letter of acceptance from Environmental Science will normally state the home department and faculty advisor for the student and will be signed by a representative of the home department, such as the department chair or DOGE as well as by the chair of the Environmental Science program. By doing so, the home department is making a commitment to provide access to departmental resources that are available to all their graduate students (e.g., office space, administrative services, copy machines, access to TA/RA support as defined by the policy statement of the home department, etc.).

Amendment of the Governance Document

This governance document can be amended at any time by a vote of the Environmental Science Core Faculty. Proposals to amend this governance document may be submitted to the Supervisory Committee by any member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty at any time. The Supervisory Committee will compile all proposed amendments for a vote by the Environmental Science Core Faculty at least annually. Amendments to the Governance Document will be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a valid ballot. At least 51% of the Core Faculty must vote for the ballot to be valid. Actively entered abstentions count toward the quorum but do not count as votes cast in tabulating the outcome. A current version of the Governance Document shall be maintained in the Environmental Science Graduate Major office and posted on the Environmental Science Graduate Major web site.

Curriculum

The Environmental Science curriculum is designed to provide the interdisciplinary approach needed in Environmental Science education and research while allowing flexibility in designing individual programs. Students and their faculty advisors are expected to balance needs for focus and breadth in developing individual programs of study. Specific degree requirements for Environmental Science majors (inclusive of co-majors) are supplied on the Environmental Science website - <https://enscigrad.iastate.edu/academics/>.

The Environmental Science curriculum can be amended at any time by a vote of the Environmental Science Core Faculty. Proposals to amend the curriculum may be submitted to the Supervisory Committee by any member of the Environmental Science Graduate Faculty at any time. The Supervisory Committee will compile all proposed amendments for a vote by the Environmental Science Core Faculty at least annually. Amendments to the curriculum will be adopted by a simple majority of the votes cast in a valid ballot. At least 51% of the Core Faculty must vote for the ballot to be valid. Actively entered abstentions count toward the quorum but do not count as votes cast in tabulating the outcome. A current version of the curriculum shall be maintained in the Environmental Science Graduate Major office and posted on the Environmental Science Graduate Major web site.