

# Program Change Request

Date Submitted: 02/23/24 4:13 pm

Viewing: **SC-PHD-EVPP : Environmental Science and Public Policy, PhD**

Last approved: 04/28/23 12:41 pm

Last edit: 03/21/24 10:31 am

Changes proposed by: jbazaz

**Catalog Pages Using this Program**  
[Environmental Science and Public Policy, PhD](#)

Are you completing this form on someone else's behalf?

No

Effective Catalog:

2024-2025

Program Level:

Graduate

Program Type:

Doctoral

Degree Type:

Doctor of Philosophy

Title:

Environmental Science and Public Policy, PhD

Banner Title:

Enviro Sci & Public Policy PhD

Registrar/OAPI Use Only – SCHEV Status

Approved

Registrar’s Office Use Only – Program Start Term

Registrar/OAPI Use Only – SCHEV Letter

Registrar/OAPI Use Only – SACSCOC Status

**In Workflow**

1. ESP GR Committee
2. ESP Chair
3. SC Curriculum Committee
4. SC Assistant Dean
5. Assoc Provost-Graduate
6. Registrar-Programs

**Approval Path**

1. 03/12/24 6:58 pm  
Esther Peters (epeters2):  
Approved for ESP GR Committee
2. 03/13/24 4:56 pm  
Amy Fowler (afowler6):  
Approved for ESP Chair

**History**

1. Nov 8, 2017 by clmig-jwehrheim
2. Feb 22, 2018 by rzachari
3. Mar 7, 2019 by scheselk
4. Sep 26, 2019 by Jennifer Bazaz Gettys (jbazaz)
5. Jan 16, 2020 by Jennifer Bazaz Gettys (jbazaz)

**Concentration(s):****Registrar/IRR Use  
Only –  
Concentration CIP  
Code****College/School:** College of Science**Department /  
Academic Unit:** Environmental Science & Policy**Jointly Owned  
Program?** No**Justification**

What: Referring applicants to central admissions language and removing extraneous wording.

Why: To make the program more adaptable to changes in university policies.

What: Removing the GRE requirement.

Why: Updating the catalog to meet current processes.

What: We have solidified common core to requirements.

Why: SCHEV requirement.

What: Removed Environmental Law from required doctoral coursework.

Why: We have now added the Policy and Social Science core bucket so we no longer need it to be specified as a part of the additional requirements.

6. Mar 5, 2020 by Tory

Sarro (vsarro)

7. Mar 6, 2020 by  
jriemen8. Jan 29, 2021 by  
Jennifer Bazaz  
Gettys (jbazaz)9. Feb 23, 2021 by  
jriemen10. Mar 5, 2021 by  
jriemen11. Apr 28, 2023 by  
Tory Sarro (vsarro)**Total Credits**

Total credits: 72

**Required:****Registrar's Office Use Only - Program Code:**

SC-PHD-EVPP

**Registrar/IRR Use  
Only – Program CIP  
Code****Admission  
Requirements:**

## Admissions

University-wide admissions policies can be found in the [Graduate Admissions Policies](#) section of this catalog.[International](#) ~~Additionally, information on the admission of international~~ students [and students having earned](#)

international degrees should also refer to ~~can be found in the Admission of International~~ International Students for additional requirements. ~~section of this catalog.~~

## ~~To apply for this program, please complete the George Mason University Admissions Application.~~ **Eligibility and Application Requirements**

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Applicants should ~~also~~ have a bachelor's degree with an overall GPA of at least 3.00 from an institution of higher education accredited by a Mason-recognized U.S. ~~3.00: institutional accrediting agency or international equivalent.~~ Applicants should ~~They should~~ have taken at least two semesters of chemistry and three semesters of biology, including a course in ecology.

It is advantageous for applicants ~~Applicants to the PhD program should~~ have an advanced degree (e.g. MA, MS, veterinary, or law) in a relevant field.

~~For applicants who fulfill this requirement, the GRE is waived.~~ For applicants who apply with a Bachelor's Degree or Licentiate (i.e. *Licenciatura*), they should possess exceptional undergraduate academic and research accomplishments. ~~Science, Ecology, and Social~~

## Science Background

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### Biology and Chemistry ~~Science~~ Background

Applicants who lack college-level coursework in biology and chemistry (two semesters of each) should complete a two-semester sequence of introductory graduate-level environmental chemistry and biology courses as follows:

EVPP 506 Science of the Environment I 3

EVPP 507 Science of the Environment II 3

Total Credits 6

These introductory courses cannot be added to the graduate program of study, they will be additional credits to the degree's 72 credit total.

### Ecology Background

Students without previous coursework in general ecology will be required to take the following introductory graduate course, which may be included in the graduate program of study.

EVPP 607 Fundamentals of Ecology 3

## Application Requirements

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To apply for this program/certificate, prospective students should submit the George Mason University Admissions Application and its required supplemental documentation, and:

- ~~For these applicants, the GRE will be required, with a combined verbal and quantitative score of 310 or higher.~~ ~~Applicants should submit the following:~~ Transcripts from previous university coursework including ~~degrees awarded.~~ Three letters of recommendation with at least two from individuals with doctorates.
- ~~Current résumé.~~ Substantial statement of interest that includes a description of the specific area of proposed dissertation research, the potential focus (environmental science or environmental public policy), contacts that have been made with potential faculty advisors, and an explanation of career and research goals.

- Prospective Advisor Form completed by a faculty member who has similar research interests to yours and will mentor you during your degree program. ~~Letter of endorsement from a prospective advisor to include how your research interests coincide with that of your advisor.~~ Information on faculty members eligible to serve as advisors/committee chairs can be found by contacting the department via phone (703-993-3187) or via email ([espgrad@gmu.edu](mailto:espgrad@gmu.edu)).
- All students must obtain the consent of a faculty member willing to serve as an advisor prior to being fully admitted to the program. Admission decisions are based on the student's qualifications and the availability of a faculty advisor. An advisor may be changed by mutual consent of student and advisor, or by petition to the graduate program director and the associate dean for undergraduate and graduate student affairs in the College of Science.

The GRE is not required for admission into this program.

~~Applicants with questions should contact the ESP Graduate Programs Office via phone (703-993-3187) or via email ([espgrad@gmu.edu](mailto:espgrad@gmu.edu)). Science, Ecology, and Social Science Background Science Background Applicants who lack college-level coursework in biology and chemistry (two semesters of each) should complete a two-semester sequence of introductory graduate-level environmental chemistry and biology courses as follows: These introductory courses cannot be added to the graduate program of study, they will be additional credits to the degree's 72 credit total. Ecology Background Students without previous coursework in general ecology will be required to take the following introductory graduate course, which may be included in the graduate program of study. Social Science Background Students with little previous coursework in the social sciences will be required to take the following introductory course, which may be included in the graduate program of study.~~

~~EVPP 608 Introduction to Environmental Social Science3~~

Program-Specific  
Policies:

## Policies

For policies governing all graduate programs, see [AP.6 Graduate Policies](#).

### Transferring Previous Graduate Credit into this Program

Previously earned and relevant graduate credits may be eligible for transfer into this program; details can be found in the Credit by Exam or Transfer section of this catalog.

~~Reduction of Credits For students entering the doctoral program with a master's degree in an academically-related field from an institution of higher education accredited by a Mason-recognized U.S. institutional accrediting agency or international equivalent, the number of required credits may be reduced up to 30 credits, subject to approval of the program faculty and the college's associate dean for student affairs. See AP.6.5.2 Reduction of Credits for more information.~~

#### Degree Requirements:

This is a Green Leaf program.

Students should refer to the [Admissions & Policies](#) tab for specific policies related to this program. ~~Doctoral Coursework~~

Students are required to complete a coursework proposal by the end of their second semester. The coursework proposal must be approved by the student's advisor and the graduate program director. In keeping with the general philosophy inherent in a PhD degree, students adopt an individual program that focuses on a specific area of research. The student's coursework must provide the knowledge base from which an original research project in their specific areas of interest can be successfully completed.

## ~~Natural Sciences Public Policy Research Methods and Technology~~

~~Doctoral Seminar Students must present a total of 4 graduate seminar credits, with EVPP 991 Advanced Seminar in Environmental Science taken at least once.~~ **Doctoral Core**

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~~Students should carefully choose coursework to ensure they have the necessary skills to support dissertation research.~~

Select at least one course from each of the following categories:

### Natural Science

3

EVPP 518 Conservation Biology

EVPP 527 Conservation Medicine

EVPP 550 Waterscape Ecology and Management

EVPP 581 Estuarine and Coastal Ecology

### Policy and Social Science

3

EVPP 530 Evidence-Based Environmental Policymaking

EVPP 534 Food-Energy-Water Nexus

### Methods

3

EVPP 585 Quantitative Data Analysis for Environmental Scientists

EVPP 632 Qualitative Research Methods for Environmental Scientists

EVPP 651 Multivariate Data Analysis for Ecology and Environmental Science

### Transdisciplinarity and Professionalization

3

EVPP 505 Selected Topics in Environmental Science (when the topic is "Career Development for Environmental Scientists")

### Doctoral Seminar

4

EVPP 692 Master's Seminar in Environmental Science and Public Policy

EVPP 991 Advanced Seminar in Environmental Science (taken at least once)

Total Credits

16

## **Natural Sciences**

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~~Select at least 12 credits in biology, chemistry, environmental science, geology, geography, or environmental engineering~~

12

Select at least 9 additional credits in biology, chemistry, environmental science, geology, geography, or environmental engineering

9

Public Policy

Select at least 12 credits in public affairs, economics, sociology, and/or business. A course in environmental law is also required as part of this category

Select at least 9 additional credits in public affairs, economics, sociology, and/or business.

Total Credits9

Research Methods and Technology

Select at least 6 credits in statistics, remote sensing, geographic information systems, analytical chemistry, molecular biology, modeling, or information technology

Select at least 3 additional credits in statistics, remote sensing, geographic information systems, analytical chemistry, molecular biology, modeling, or information technology. Students should carefully choose coursework to ensure they have the necessary skills to support dissertation research.

Total Credits3

Program Coursework Focus Electives Dissertation CommitteeBefore the end of Study Emphasis

If necessary after doctoral coursework and dissertation research, students take additional electives to bring the total number of credits to 72.

Total Credits0

Previous thesis research courses may not be applied to fulfill the coursework focus described here. See advisor for further details.

Four credits from

EVPP-692 Master's Seminar in Environmental Science and Public Policy

EVPP-991 Advanced Seminar in Environmental Science

Total Credits0

Students select a Program of Study Emphasis within one of two areas of focus. Previous thesis research courses may not be applied to fulfill the Program of Study Emphasis; see advisor for further details.

Environmental Science

Select 12 credits in natural science coursework

Select 12 credits in natural science coursework

Environmental Public Policy

Select 12 credits of public policy coursework

Select 12 credits of public policy coursework

Total Credits12

Electives

If necessary, students select elective courses in order to reach a total of 72 credits.0-11

Total Credits

0-11

## Dissertation Committee

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Before the end ~~the fourth semester~~ of the fourth semester of coursework, in consultation with their advisor, the student forms a dissertation committee of ~~of~~ at least four members. Three of the committee members must be from the Mason graduate faculty. The fourth member may be from Mason or may be from outside the university provided that they hold a terminal degree in an appropriate field. The dissertation committee must be approved by the college's associate dean for student affairs.

## Program of Study

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After reviewing the student's coursework proposal, progress to date, and area of research, the committee makes final recommendations concerning coursework that will be codified in the program of study to be signed by all committee members and the graduate program director. Students are advised to work closely with their advisor and committee to develop the coursework program in order to facilitate the process of course selection. During the duration of graduate study, a student must meet with the full dissertation committee at least once a year.

## Qualifying Exams

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On completion of all or nearly all coursework, students may request to take the qualifying or candidacy exam. The qualifying exam has both written and oral components. The written portion consists of questions submitted by each member of the dissertation committee. Successful completion of the written exam should be followed by the oral portion within one month. The qualifying exam may be repeated once at the discretion of the student's committee.

## Advancement to Candidacy

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Upon approval of the program of study, completion of all or nearly all coursework, successful completion of the qualifying exam, and the approval of the dissertation proposal by the dissertation committee, the student is recommended for advancement to candidacy by the graduate program director. Students must advance to candidacy within six years of admission to the program.

## Dissertation Research, Dissertation Defense, and Graduation

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Students must complete a dissertation. The dissertation is an original written work, demonstrating mastery of subject matter, methodologies, and conceptual foundations on a specific problem in the general field of environmental science and public policy. The dissertation generally involves collection and analysis of original data or the substantially new analysis and reinterpretation of existing data.

Dissertation completion may be accomplished by taking [EVPP 999](#) Doctoral Dissertation Research alone, or in combination with [EVPP 998](#) Doctoral Dissertation Proposal. However, at least six of these credits must be taken as [EVPP 999](#) Doctoral Dissertation Research.

Before students may enroll in [EVPP 999](#) Doctoral Dissertation Research, they must have advanced to candidacy and have a dissertation proposal approved by the dissertation committee, graduate program director, department

chairperson, and the dean of the College of Science. Students working on dissertation research must register for a minimum of 3 credits of [EVPP 999](#) Doctoral Dissertation Research per semester (excluding summers) until they have completed the minimum number of dissertation research credits. Then, they must register for 1 credit of [EVPP 999](#) Doctoral Dissertation Research until the dissertation is complete and has been officially submitted to the library. Students must present the completed dissertation in a public seminar and defend the work before the dissertation committee and others who wish to attend. Awarding of the degree is contingent on approval of the dissertation by the dissertation committee, graduate program director, department chairperson, and the dean of the College of Science. The dissertation and defense must be completed a total of nine years from the date of first enrollment in the doctoral program.

Select 12-24 credits from the following: 12-24

[EVPP 998](#) Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

[EVPP 999](#) Doctoral Dissertation Research (at least 6 credits)

Total Credits 12-24

**Retroactive  
Requirements  
Updates:**

**Plan of Study:**

**Program Outcomes**

## **Additional Program Information**

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*This information is required by the Office of Accreditation and Program Integrity.*

**Courses offered via  
distance (if  
applicable):**

**What is the  
primary delivery  
format for the  
program?** Face-to-Face Only

**Does any portion of this program occur off-campus?**

No

**Are you working with a vendor / other collaborators to offer your program?**

No

**Related  
Departments**

**Could this program prepare students for any type of professional licensure, in  
Virginia or elsewhere?**

No

**Are you adding or removing a licensure component?**

No



## Additional SCHEV & SACSCOC Information

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Is this change a simple retitling of an existing program, with no other changes, to any existing program content, curriculum requirements, etc?

No

Does this change represent a repackaging of content in an existing approved degree/certificate program at the same instructional level (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral)?

No

Percentage of total credits containing new course content. ("New course content" is defined by SACSCOC as content that is not currently included in an existing approved degree/certificate program at the same instructional level. Do not exclude gen ed credits in calculations for undergraduate programs.)

0%-24%

Does this change include the addition of a distance education or face-to-face method of delivery for this program?

No

Does this change include the addition of a course/credit-based competency-based education delivery option?

No

Will any additional equipment/facilities be needed?

No

Will any additional faculty be required?

No

Will any additional financial resources be needed?

No

Additional library/learning resources needed?

No

## OAPI Use Only – Determination of SACSCOC Impact

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**Comments or Notes****Green Leaf Program Designation**

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**Is this a Green Leaf program?** Yes

**Green Leaf Designation** Sustainability-focused designation

*Sustainability-focused academic programs require at least one green leaf course. Either that course is itself sustainability-focused or else the program requires a set of sustainability-related courses with aggregated substance equivalent to a sustainability-focused course.*

**Relationship to Existing Courses**

**Relationship to Existing Programs**

**List sustainability-focused courses currently required in the degree program:**

**Does this program cover material which crosses into another department?**

No

**Additional Attachments**

**SCHEV Proposal**

**Executive Summary**

**Reviewer Comments**

**Additional Comments**

**Is this course required of all students in this degree program?**

%wi\_required.eshtml%