

Master of Science in Environmental Sciences

Program Handbook

This handbook outlines specific academic requirements and expectations for students enrolled in the MS in Environmental Sciences through the Laney Graduate School at Emory University. This handbook addresses program specific policies regarding enrollment, course requirements, course selection and thesis progression. Policies related to satisfactory academic progress and maintaining good standing within the program are determined by the Laney Graduate School through its handbook. The Laney Graduate School handbook is available as a PDF through its website:

<https://www.gs.emory.edu/academics/policies-progress/index.html>

In addition to those policies and procedures provided here and through the Laney Graduate School, students, faculty and administrators are subject to applicable university-wide policies.

I. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Curriculum

The curriculum for the Master of Science in Environmental Sciences combines research experience with developing quantitative skills while integrating courses in the natural and social sciences. The curriculum comprises the following coursework:

Required Courses: 18 credit hours

Quantitative skills (6-8 credit hours):

1. Two courses to be determined in consultation with the student's faculty advisor

Natural Science (3 credit hours):

1. One course

Environmental Policy (3 credit hours):

1. One course

Science/Policy Integration (3 credit hours):

1. Choose one of the following:
ENVS 521- Natural Resource Management
OR
ENVS 575-Global Change Sciences

Graduate Seminar (2 credit hours):

1. ENVS 590: Graduate Seminar in ENVS

Elective Courses: 9 credit hours

Thesis: 9 credit hours to begin during the second year of study

TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED: 35

B. Course Planning & Selection

Students must meet each semester with their faculty advisor to discuss course selection. Elective courses may be taken outside of the department or through the [ARCHE](#) program with faculty advisor approval. Students will work with the Graduate Programs Coordinator to process course enrollments each semester.

C. Thesis Planning and Progress

PLANNING FOR YOUR PROJECT

Target date: early 1st semester

1. Targeted discussion and research of proposed thesis project with primary advisor
2. Formulate ONE PAGE CONCEPT PAPER to present when meeting with prospective committee members
3. Establishing Emory faculty committee members
4. Discussing financing plan with primary advisor
5. Exploring funding options for research
6. Course planning with faculty advisor and graduate program advisor

PROJECT PLANNING

Target date: end of 1st semester

1. Propose Thesis topic
2. Select thesis advisor and 2 committee members from Emory graduate faculty
3. Schedule Committee Meeting

Please consider the following:

- a) A description of the research area
- b) Contacts you are exploring; note if you have been in touch with them about your project
- c) Your proposed study question and possible hypotheses you wish to test
- d) Description of the existing dataset or the dataset you propose to collect that will support your thesis
- e) Detailed summer research plans if your research is field-based
- f) Emory University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review – if needed, initial steps for IRB approval
- g) Literature Review

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Target date: January of 1st year

The student's thesis advisor and committee members must agree that the student's proposal is feasible; that a testable research question has been proposed; that the data collection and analysis plan is appropriate; and that the student demonstrates capability to execute the plan.

Include Name, date, program, and proposed thesis title at the top.

- a) Specific aims of the project

- b) Hypothesis/specific objectives and predicted outcomes
- c) Background and significance - include an abbreviated literature review, approximately 2-4 paragraphs
- d) Research methods
 - Data - detail the nature of the dataset, including data types, time periods and other features
 - Analysis plan - detail the specific analytical approach(es) you will take to test your hypotheses
- e) References
- f) Projected timeline for completing the thesis - include target dates for writing introduction and methods, completing analysis, and writing results and discussion

ESTABLISHING A TIMELINE - September of 2nd year:

Establish a timeline that addresses a realistic turn-around time for your advisor to review thesis drafts and provide comments; include time for your revisions. Ensure your advisor(s) will be available during important turn-around times and before signatures are due.

THESIS PROGRESS APPROVAL – December of 2nd year:
Completion of introduction and methods section

First Thesis Draft – February of 2nd year

Second Thesis Draft – Early March of 2nd year

Final Thesis & Thesis Defense – Mid March of 2nd year

Thesis submission to Laney ~ Early April of 2nd year

D. Travel Registration When Conducting International Research

If a student in the MS in Environmental Science program engages in international research, they must register with their research trip with the CEPAR (Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response).

Per the Laney Graduate School: When you travel, please protect your personal safety. Visit [Emory's International Travel](#) resources site, and use the [International SOS](#) feature to learn about advisories affecting the region you will travel to, and to make a record of where you will be and how you can be reached.

This record can be essential. In the case of tragic events such as natural disaster and abrupt violence, information in International SOS records can help us to quickly ascertain that members of the Emory community near those are safe and unharmed.

E. Teaching Assistantship

MS/ENVS students may take a position as a teaching assistant for an undergraduate course in Environmental Sciences, usually during the second year of their program. Assistantship assignments will be determined in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, the student's advisor and the Chair of ENVS.

II. DEGREE PROGRESS

Students will meet with their primary research advisor prior to pre-registration each semester to discuss degree progress and course selection. Students typically complete the MS program within two years of study. Any request for leave must be processed through the Laney Graduate School and comply with all of their policies and procedures as outlined in the [Laney Graduate School Handbook](#).

III. TUITION AND BILL PAYMENT

Tuition

Information about tuition and fees for graduate students is available through the Laney Graduate School [website](#).

Mandatory Health Insurance

Emory University requires all degree-seeking students (domestic and international) to show evidence of health insurance or purchase the Emory Student Health Insurance Plan. Information detailing this requirement is available [here](#).

Paying Bills

You must pay your bill through the [Student Accounts & Billing Office](#). Payment for any semester is due approximately ten days before the official start of the term. If you are enrolling during the late registration period or drop/add session for your school, payment in full is due on that day. If payment is not made by the end of the drop/add session, your course schedule will be cancelled.

IV. HONOR CODE AND CONDUCT

The Laney Graduate School Honor Code will apply to all cases of academic misconduct for MS/ENVS students. Details of the expectations of academic and personal integrity while a student in the MS/ENVS program in the Laney Graduate School are outlined in the Laney Student Handbook posted on their [website](#).

Grievance Process

Students who have a grievance related to some aspect of their program in the Department of Environmental Sciences should report it to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The document should describe the grievance and relevant details in a letter addressed to the DGS, who will try, if possible, to resolve the grievance in conversation with the student and relevant parties. If this is not successful, the DGS will appoint a committee of three ENVS faculty members (or faculty members outside the department if the situation warrants) to review the grievance and propose an appropriate response. If it is impossible to resolve the grievance within this committee or within the framework of the Department's administrative structure, the Director will forward the grievance to the Office of the Senior Associate Dean of the Laney Graduate School. From this point forward, the grievance will be handled according to the Grievance Procedure outlined in the Laney Graduate School Handbook. If the issue is with the Director, the student should go directly to the Senior Associate Dean of the Laney Graduate School.