

Program Change Request

Date Submitted: 02/18/25 9:34 am

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

Last approved: 05/30/24 7:55 pm

Last edit: 02/18/25 9:34 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?

Yes

Requestor:

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. 02/27/25 12:02 pm
Esther Peters (epeters2):
Approved for ESP GR Committee
2. 02/27/25 12:09 pm
Gad Perry (gperry23):
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)

- 6. Mar 5, 2020 by Tory Sarro (vsarro)
- 7. Mar 6, 2020 by jriemen
- 8. Jan 29, 2021 by Jennifer Bazaz Gettys (jbazaz)
- 9. Feb 23, 2021 by jriemen
- 10. Mar 5, 2021 by jriemen
- 11. Apr 28, 2023 by Tory Sarro (vsarro)
- 12. Apr 26, 2024 by Jennifer Bazaz Gettys (jbazaz)
- 13. May 30, 2024 by Tory Sarro (vsarro)

Name	Extension	Email
Ted Hsuan Yun Chen	5302	tchen28@GMU.EDU

Effective Catalog: 2025-2026

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

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: Inclusion of EVPP 675 (Environmental Planning and Administration) as a doctoral core course for the Policy and Social Science category.

Why: The course provides students with a deep understanding of environmental policy processes, actors, and policy mechanisms. Students can apply the concepts to their chosen dissertation or research projects when drawing policy implications.

What: Inclusion of EVPP 630 (Methods and Logic of Social Inquiry) as a doctoral core course for the Methods category. Removal of EVPP 632 (Qualitative Research Methods for Environmental Scientists) from the Methods category of the doctoral core.

Why: This set of changes updates the research design component of ESP's environmental social science curriculum. We are no longer limiting environmental social science methodology to qualitative methods, so using EVPP 630 fits better than EVPP 632.

What: In our doctoral degree catalog, where it provides information about the dissertation proposal defense, explicitly specify that it needs to be open to the public.

Why: The requirement is in the COS Graduate Handbook, but our students are confused and can end up missing this requirement because it is not stated in our degree requirement in the catalog.

**Total Credits
Required:** Total credits: 72

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 students and students having earned international degrees should also refer to [Admission of International Students](#) for additional requirements.

Eligibility

Applicants should 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. institutional accrediting agency or international equivalent. Applicants should have taken at least two semesters of chemistry and three semesters of biology, including a course in ecology.

It is advantageous for applicants to have an advanced degree (e.g. MA, MS, veterinary, or law) in a relevant field. For applicants who apply with a bachelor's degree or Licentiate (i.e. *Licenciatura*), they should possess exceptional undergraduate academic and research accomplishments.

Science Background

Biology and Chemistry 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

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

- Three letters of recommendation with at least two from individuals with doctorates.
- 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. 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).

- 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.

**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.

**Degree
Requirements:**

This is a Green Leaf program.

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

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.

Doctoral Core

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

<u>EVPP 675</u>	<u>Environmental Planning and Administration</u>	
Methods		3
<u>EVPP 585</u>	Quantitative Data Analysis for Environmental Scientists	
<u>EVPP 632</u>	Qualitative Research Methods for Environmental Scientists	
<u>EVPP 630</u>	<u>Research Design for Environmental Social Scientists</u>	
<u>EVPP 651</u>	Multivariate Data Analysis for Ecology and Environmental Science	
Transdisciplinarity and Professionalization		3
<u>EVPP 505</u>	Selected Topics in Environmental Science (when the topic is "Career Development for Environmental Scientists")	
Doctoral Seminar		4
<u>EVPP 692</u>	Master's Seminar in Environmental Science and Public Policy	
<u>EVPP 991</u>	Advanced Seminar in Environmental Science (taken at least once)	
Total Credits		16

Natural Sciences

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

Public Policy

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

Research Methods and 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.	3
Total Credits	3

Program of Study Emphasis

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.	12
--	----

Environmental Science

Select 12 credits in natural science coursework

Environmental Public Policy

Select 12 credits of public policy coursework

Total Credits	12
---------------	----

Electives

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

Total Credits	0-11
---------------	------

Dissertation Committee

Before the end of the fourth semester of coursework, in consultation with their advisor, the student forms a dissertation committee of at least four members. Details on dissertation committee formation can be found in the [AP.6.10.5 section of this catalog](#). The dissertation committee must be approved by the college's associate dean for undergraduate and graduate student affairs.

Program of Study

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

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

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

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 [seminar open to the 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

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

Courses offered via distance (if applicable):

What is the primary delivery	Face-to-Face Only
-------------------------------------	-------------------

format for the program?**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

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

Have you reached out to the Libraries to determine whether there are adequate resources to support your program? If not, please email Meg Meiman, Associate University Librarian for Learning, Research, and Engagement at mmeiman2@gmu.edu.

OAPI Use Only – Determination of SACSCOC Impact

Comments or Notes

Green Leaf Program Designation

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%

Key: 190