

# ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

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The doctoral program in ENVS gives students the opportunity to pursue a research-based degree situated in a program that prioritizes cross-disciplinary perspectives and problem-oriented scholarship. PhD students are trained to become independent researchers, usually working closely with one or more faculty advisors and committee members. PhD students complete coursework that spans the natural and social sciences, values and ethics, and policy. Students develop an independent line of research through their dissertation project and other collaborations over the course of their graduate career. Students within the program conduct research in a variety of environmental fields, usually working closely with one or more faculty advisors and committee members.

While a student's research project shapes much of their graduate career, coursework, colloquia and other activities are also key parts of the graduate experience. This is particularly important in ENVS as all these endeavors provide the breadth of knowledge that is key for those seeking to contribute to environmental research and management.

For more information, visit the program's PhD webpage. (<https://www.colorado.edu/envs/graduate-studies/graduate-programs/phd-program/>) View the department website for additional graduate student resources (<https://www.colorado.edu/envs/graduate-studies/policies-and-guidance-documents/>).

## Requirements

### Degree Requirements

To earn a PhD in Environmental Studies, students must complete 30 hours of coursework plus an additional 30 hours of dissertation credit hours. Major milestones are outlined below.

### Guidance Committee Meeting

During the first six weeks of a new student's first semester, a guidance committee of at least three faculty members will examine a student's past course record (from undergraduate and past graduate work) and devise a program of coursework for that student.

### Required Coursework

In addition to the courses recommended by their guidance committee, students will complete the following required courses:

- ENVS 5000 Policy, Science, and the Environment
- ENVS 5003 Conceptual Foundations of Environmental Studies
- ENVS 5004 Research Design in Environmental Studies

### Preliminary Examination

This written exam tests a student's understanding of material from the ENVS core classes, as well as the breadth and depth of their knowledge in their chosen fields of inquiry. The preliminary exam is typically taken in the student's fourth or fifth semester.

### Prospectus Defense

The prospectus defense is designed to evaluate a student's dissertation research plan. At the prospectus defense meeting, the committee also will review the student's completion of coursework assigned in previous

committee meetings. The prospectus defense should be scheduled in the student's fifth or sixth semester.

### Dissertation Defense

A doctoral student writes a dissertation based upon original investigation and showing mature scholarship and critical judgment as well as familiarity with tools and methods of research. The defense consists of both a public presentation and a closed door meeting with the committee.

## Learning Outcomes

Among the knowledge and skills that we seek to provide to every student are:

- The ability to evaluate policy goals in the context of competing societal objectives.
- Fundamental knowledge of the relevant environmental sciences to be intelligent users of scientific information.
- The ability to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines in the context of complex environmental issues.
- An understanding of the local, state, and federal decision processes that shape environmental issues.
- The ability to think critically, creatively, and holistically about environmental issues.
- The ability to work in interdisciplinary teams.
- Skill in communication with diverse audiences.

## Dual Degree Program

### PhD/JD in Environmental Studies and Colorado Law

In today's politically influenced world, it is especially important to understand both the sciences necessary to protect and improve the environment as well as environmental laws and policies. This dual degree brings together the social, economic and political realities that will so dramatically affect the future of our natural world. This program seeks to ensure that environmental studies will have its due impact on the formation of future policies and will not remain on the sidelines as crucial new decisions are being made.

Graduates of the dual degree program in law and environmental studies are well prepared to work in government, in industry or with special programs. Students should review the requirements to complete a JD degree as outlined by the School of Law. (<https://www.colorado.edu/law/academics/degrees/dual-degrees-and-certifications/>)

For more information visit the Environmental Studies programs Dual Degree webpage. (<https://www.colorado.edu/envs/graduate-studies/graduate-programs/dual-degrees-msjd-and-phdjd/>)

### Degree Requirements

A student enrolled in the dual degree program may commence studies under the program in either school. However, a student is required by the Law School to take the first year of the JD curriculum as a unit exclusively in the Law School. To complete the PhD portion of the degree, students must complete 32 hours of coursework (including the required courses listed above) plus an additional 30 hours of dissertation credit hours. Students must complete both degrees simultaneously.