

# ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES - MASTER OF SCIENCE (MS)

The ENVS Master of Science program provides advanced training in a setting that prioritizes cross-disciplinary perspectives and problem-oriented scholarship. Our goal is to deliver the knowledge and skills needed to confront 21st century environmental challenges. MS students complete coursework that spans the natural and social sciences, values and ethics, and policy. Students gain specialized research skills by writing and defending an original master's thesis.

For additional information and resources for ENVS graduate students, visit the Environmental Studies Program website (<https://www.colorado.edu/envs/graduate-studies/policies-and-guidance-documents/>).

## Requirements

To earn an MS in Environmental Studies, students must complete 30 hours of coursework and successfully defend an original master's thesis in front of a committee of three faculty members for the MSI option. For the MSII option, the student must write an original research paper and defend the content of this paper before 3 faculty members.

## Required Courses

In addition to the courses recommended by their guidance committee, students in both degree options 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

## Plan(s) of Study

The Master of Science program provides advanced training in a setting that prioritizes cross-disciplinary perspectives and problem-oriented scholarship. Our goal is to deliver the knowledge and skills needed to confront 21<sup>st</sup> century environmental challenges. MS students complete coursework that can span the natural and social sciences, values and ethics. Students gain specialized research skills by writing and defending an original master's thesis.

To earn an MS in Environmental Studies, students must complete 30 hours of coursework and successfully defend an original master's thesis or research paper in front of a committee of three faculty members. The master's degree must be completed within four years. Most students complete the MS degree with two and a half years. In option I, students must complete a Masters' thesis that presents original research. In option II, the student writes a research paper and defends it, but does not present original research. The major milestones are as follows.

## Guidance Committee Meeting

During the first six weeks of a student's first semester, a guidance committee of at least three faculty members will examine a student's past academic and professional record and recommend a program of coursework for that student.

## Degree Plans

### Plan I: Thesis Option

#### Thesis Proposal Meeting

Students must assemble a thesis committee of three faculty members and propose an original research project that will form the basis of the student's thesis. The thesis proposal meeting is typically held at the end of the student's first academic year.

#### Thesis Defense Meeting

The student will present the findings from their thesis project and respond to questions from the committee. The thesis defense meeting is typically held at the end of the student's fourth semester.

### Plan II: Non-Thesis Option

#### Independent Research Paper

The student will write a paper (i) describing either their own research conducted during the course of their graduate career in ENVS, or (ii) reviewing a related topic of interest to them. The student must obtain approval for the topic of this paper from all three faculty members on their advisory committee and the Associate Graduate Chair for ENVS. The paper should cover the conceptual background of their topic and also detail work done by the student while a graduate student or alternatively present a clear plan of analysis for how the topic could be addressed. While this paper should meet high scholarly standards, it is not expected to be as long or comprehensive as a research MS thesis.

#### Final Oral Exam

The student must schedule two hours for this exam, which is conducted by their three member advisory committee that meets Graduate School examination committee requirements. This exam will consist of questions pertaining to the independent research paper, including content of the paper and background ideas and theory. The exam may also cover coursework.

## Dual Degree Programs

### MS/MBA in Environmental Studies and Leeds School of Business

The ENVS Masters of Science program provides advanced training in a setting that prioritizes cross-disciplinary perspectives and problem-oriented scholarship. Our goal is to deliver the knowledge and skills needed to confront 21st century environmental challenges, this includes skills in business management and entrepreneurship. For these reasons, the Leeds School of Business and the Environment Studies Program collaborate to offer a dual MS/MBA degree program.

This dual degree program requires 36 credit hours of graduate coursework in environmental studies and 43 credit hours of MBA coursework (with 12 credit hours of environmental studies coursework applying toward the required 55 credit hours for the MBA). The MBA program will be considered the student's primary program. For more information, visit the Business School's MS/MBA (<https://www.colorado.edu/business/mba/full-time-mba-program/curriculum/dual-degrees/>) webpage.

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

Those who wish to pursue advanced degrees across these fields have the option of two dual degree programs: MS/JD and PhD/JD. Students will complete coursework in the core areas of the law, the natural and social sciences, values and ethics, and policy. Graduates of the dual degree

program in law and environmental studies have the skills to impact future policies in government, industry and nonprofits or to pursue research-focused careers.

This dual degree is offered in conjunction with the Law School. The Law School will grant credit for acceptable performance in graduate-level environmental studies courses toward the JD degree for up to 9 (for MS students) or 12 (for PhD students) credit hours of the required 89 credit hours for the JD degree. Environmental studies will grant up to 9 (for MS students) or 12 (for PhD students) credit hours of acceptable performance in law courses. The JD program will be considered the student's primary program. For more information, visit the Law School's MS/Juris Doctor and PhD/Juris Doctor (<https://www.colorado.edu/law/academics/degrees/dual-degrees-and-certifications/>) webpage.

## Internship Options for MS/MBA & MS/JD Students

Students pursuing one of the dual degree programs complete 36 graduate credit hours, including a 2-credit Internship for which a substantial internship report is written. A thesis is not required; however, dual degree students may opt to complete one.

Students who opt for this degree plan must complete the candidacy application (<https://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/sites/default/files/attached-files/candidacyappadv-form2018-re.pdf>) by the posted Graduate School deadline. These forms require the signatures of the student's advisor and graduate director. Copies of the forms must be filed with the graduate coordinator. Both degrees must be completed simultaneously.

## Learning Outcomes

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

- The ability to evaluate environmental 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.
- Familiarity with international governance and decision-making frameworks.
- The ability to think critically, creatively and holistically about environmental issues.
- The ability to work in interdisciplinary teams.
- Skill in communication with diverse audiences.