

Graduate Degree Requirements for the M.A.

The information contained on this website is for informational purposes only. The Undergraduate Record and Graduate Record represent the official repository for academic program requirements. These publications may be found at <http://records.ureg.virginia.edu/index.php>

Overview – The Master’s of Arts (M.A.) in Environmental Sciences is designed to provide students with an advanced, graduate-level background in the disciplines that comprise the environmental sciences, so that the knowledge gained could be applied by the student in areas such as environmental applications, law, teaching, public policy, etc. The program is coursework intensive and does not require primary research. This degree is not designed for students who wish to pursue basic research in the Environmental Sciences or related fields in the future.

- (1) **Advisor** – Upon arrival and in consultation with the M.A. program head, each student will identify an Environmental Sciences faculty advisor based upon his or her field of interest. The student may change their advisor at any time by submitting a letter outlining the request to the M.A. Program Director and the Department Chair.

- (2) **Course Requirements** – Each M.A. student must complete at least 30 credit hours, 24 of which must be from graded, graduate-level (5000-level or higher) course work (note that EVSC 8998-8999, 9998-9999: Non-Topical Research and EVSC 9995: Research Problems do not satisfy this requirement but EVXX 7999: Independent Study does). Each student should also register for EVSC 7092, Department Seminar once during their M.A. candidacy, and this course does count toward the 24 credit hours of graded course work requirement. The additional 6 credits may be fulfilled using EVSC 8998-8999, 9998-9999: Non-Topical Research and/or EVSC 9995: Research Problems. Courses offered under the same name and number and containing substantially the same material may be counted only once toward the course work requirement for the M.A. degree.

During each semester that a student is officially registered at the University of Virginia, he or she must be registered for a minimum of 12 hours of graduate credit; the 12 hours do not have to be in formal courses. Non-Topical Research (EVSC 8998-8999, 9998-9999) could be used to augment regular course work to bring the total to 12 hours.

Undergraduate majors in Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia who desire to obtain the M.A. degree may count up to 6 “excess” graduate level credits taken while the student was enrolled as an undergraduate toward the M.A. degree. “Excess” is defined as graded courses taken as an undergraduate student over and above all requirements for the Bachelor’s degree. Under no circumstances will courses be credited toward both the Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.

- (3) **Area Requirements** – All M.A. candidates are required to take at least one 3- or 4-credit nonseminar course in each of the four disciplinary areas of the department (Geosciences, Hydrology, Ecology and Atmospheric Sciences). Any courses listed in the area at the 5000-level or 7000-level meet this requirement (i.e. EVGE 5xxx or 7xxx, EVHY 5xxx or 7xxx, EVEC 5xxx or 7xxx, EVAT 5xxx or 7xxx). Courses offered as EVSC may only be used to fulfill this requirement with prior approval of the

Graduate Academic Review Committee (GARC). Each candidate must also enroll in the Department Seminar (EVSC 7092) at least once. This course counts once and only once toward the M.A. degree requirements.

- (4) **Skills Requirement** – All M.A. candidates must complete at least one 3- or 4-credit applications related course, in a topic such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), Remote Sensing, or Environmental Statistics.
- (5) **Elective Courses** – M.A. students may take up to 6 credits of related course work outside of the Environmental Sciences Department. These courses must be approved by the faculty advisor of the M.A. student. The remaining credits of graded coursework must be in EVSC, EVAT, EVEC, EVGE, or EVHY courses. Departures from Course Requirement rules must be approved in advance via petition to the GARC prior to the start of the semester during which the courses are to be taken.
- (6) **Committee Formation** – Each student should form a committee consisting of an advisor and at least two external readers, at least one of whom is a member of the Environmental Sciences faculty. Selection of individuals for this committee is dictated by the nature of the research topic examined.
- (7) **Thesis** – In consultation with the advisor, the M.A. student must complete a thesis. During the student's final semester, the thesis results must be presented in both oral and written forms to the Department faculty. Preparation and submission of final copies of the document and its oral presentation should adhere to the Department's and University's guidelines that exist for the Master's of Science. Examples of appropriate projects could include a detailed survey of the consequential literature on a given topic or the compilation and synthesis of disparate data sources related to an important environmental issue.
- (8) **Exceptions** – Exceptions to any of the M.A. requirements must be approved in advance by the M.A. Program Director.

OTHER INFORMATION

- A. *Admissions* – M.A. students are admitted based upon the same requirements as all other graduate students. The minimum requirements for admission are identical to those for M.S. candidates. M.A. students wishing to apply for admission to the M.S. or Ph.D. programs can do so by submitting a Degree Transition Form, which must be signed by the student's anticipated M.S. or Ph.D. advisor and approved by the Department Chair. The Director of Graduate Studies will then petition the Graduate School for final approval.
 - B. *Financial Aid* – No teaching assistantship or Departmental fellowship support is generally available to M.A. students.
 - C. *M.A. Program Director* – Questions related to the M.A. should be directed to the faculty member responsible for supervision of the M.A. program. This person has an ex officio position on the GARC and Graduate Admissions committee and is responsible for oversight of the M.A. program, including advising students until they find an academic advisor.
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