

Handbook for Graduate Studies

Department of Environment and Sustainability
College of Arts and Sciences
University at Buffalo

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Preface

This handbook has been prepared as a guide to help students anticipate deadlines, navigate procedures and regulations successfully, and answer questions that may arise during your graduate studies. It is our interpretation of policy and practice. Some of the rules for graduate degrees administered by the Department of Environment and Sustainability (EVS) are established by the Graduate School; others are rules established by the Department. Only selected requirements of the Graduate School are reproduced below. For issues not addressed here, please consult the UB Graduate School's policy library. In general, students are held to the EVS-defined programmatic requirements of the handbook version dated the year that they entered their program. However, all rules are subject to revision by the Graduate School or the Department. It is the sole responsibility of individual students to know and follow the policies of the Department and of the University. Please periodically check this handbook to ensure you are on track with your academic requirements and are looking ahead to your next milestones.

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EVS Department Overview

Introduction

The mission of the Department of Environment and Sustainability (EVS) is to help solve the most complex socioecological problems that face humankind today. These range from global climate change and biodiversity loss to population and consumption growth, to how we discuss and reach decisions regarding the complex human-natural systems that affect the Earth's future. EVS provides an interdisciplinary home for the development of innovative and integrative approaches to environmental teaching, research and outreach.

Our faculty conduct research in fields as various as sustainability, history, the media arts, evolutionary biology, and policy, all focusing on the complex interactions in the environment. Our faculty energizes UB's commitment to multidisciplinary research, collaboration, and outreach. As such, our graduate programs attract a wide array of students with a diversity of backgrounds from around the nation and the world. We prepare our students to become researchers and practitioners at the interface of the human and natural world. Our students engage in real-world and transdisciplinary research. Students will succeed in today's career market by having the critical thinking skills and experience required to put often opposing theories into practice. Many students end up working in non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGO's), governmental and policy setting bodies, and private companies such as environmental consulting groups.

Departmental Organization

EVS is a department in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) at UB and is home to undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs. Some EVS faculty have 100% of their appointment in EVS, while others have their majority (75%) appointment in another department and their minority (25%) appointment in EVS. Faculty affiliations are identifiable in the EVS faculty webpage as having two departments listed with their name, such as Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Communication, Geography, Geology, and Media Studies.

Graduate Programs

EVS oversees two primary graduate programs: **Evolution, Ecology and Behavior (EEB)** is an inter-departmental graduate program in CAS that is administered by EVS that offers a MS and PhD, both with tracks in Ecology (ECO) and in Sustainability Studies (SUS). EEB faculty come from multiple CAS departments. Some EEB faculty are majority or minority faculty in EVS, but others have no appointment in EVS. EEB faculty can serve as research advisors and committee members on EEB degrees. The **Master's in Sustainability Leadership (MSL)** is an inter-decanal (cross-school) graduate program administered by EVS. Courses and research advisors in MSL come from many departments across multiple schools and colleges in UB: College of Arts and Sciences, School of Architecture and Planning, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and School of Management.

Department and Program Administration

Departmental Chair (Chair): The Chair is a faculty member and the Department's chief executive and administrative officer. The Chair guides the Department's teaching, research, and service activities; conducts its administrative operations; and represents the Department to the University. The current EVS Chair is Dr. Timothy Cheval.

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): A DGS is a faculty member who supervises the Department's graduate programs. A DGS is responsible for directing the recruitment of graduate students, reviewing and making decisions on graduate student applications, orienting new graduate students and helping them find a faculty advisor, maintaining and developing the graduate program, coordinating the Annual Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes (AAPAR), and monitoring graduate student progress towards the completion of degree requirements. The current EVS DGS is Dr. Kirk Jalbert. Note that the MSL is directed by Dr. Susan Clark in coordination with the DGS.

Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS): Similar to the DGS, the DUS is faculty member who supervises the Department's undergraduate programs. The DUS is also responsible for communicating teaching assistant needs to the DGS on a semesterly basis. The current EVS DUS is Dr. Nick Henshue.

Graduate Committee: The Graduate Committee (or Graduate Affairs Committee) is comprised of a number of faculty consistent with the Department by-laws, plus the Director of Graduate Studies. The committee has four main functions: (1) reviewing admission requests to the Department; (2) dealing with policy issues affecting the graduate program and making recommendations to the faculty as a whole; (3) reviewing and approving the programs of individual students, including petitions for waivers, exemptions, etc.; (4) ensuring the efficient operation of the graduate program.

Graduate Program Coordinator: The Graduate Program Coordinator is a staff member who works closely with the DGS to assist the Department's graduate students with administrative questions and fulfills administrative tasks, such as filing forms and requests with the Graduate School, completing force registrations into courses, and making exceptions in HUB for course requirements. The Graduate Program Coordinator also sends out important correspondence and reminders of deadlines. The current EVS Graduate Program Coordinator is Maggie-Bales Clark.

Graduate Admissions Coordinator: The Graduate Admissions Coordinator is a staff member who helps prospective EEB and SL students process their applications and coordinate the processing of them with the DGS, the GAC, and the graduate school.

Department Administrator: The Department Administrator is a staff member who oversees the Department's financial accounts, course scheduling, personnel paperwork, faculty searches, and general office management.

Evolution, Ecology and Behavior (EEB)

Description

The EEB program focuses on the study of complex interactions in the environment. The mission is to train students with interdisciplinary competencies in research and education and it is designed to incorporate expertise that is distributed across multiple departments into a single graduate program. The program offers a Master of Science (MS) and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Within each degree, we offer an Ecology Track (ECO) and a Sustainability Track (SUS). Generally, the EEB MS degree is pursued by students who are either intent on careers in the fields of consulting, teaching, ecological and environmental sciences, NGOs or government agencies; or who are preparing for a higher degree. The EEB PhD degree is suitable for students who wish to build research-oriented careers trajectories, particularly those who may pursue academic careers.

The ECO Track applies scientific principles and methods to topics, including the evolution of biodiversity over space and time and the effects of climate change on ecosystems. The SUS Track is a research-focused degree program which facilitates the integration of social and natural science approaches to achieving a more just and sustainable future. The SUS Track is well suited to those investigating the political and ecological dimensions of environmental transformations, the relationship of science and society in advancing more sustainable futures, and novel approaches to community-based problem solving.

Admissions

Requirements: Applicants should have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. The EEB program is competitive, and average GPA admission scores are generally 3.5 for MS, and 3.8 for PhD applicants. For international applicants with different grading systems (e.g., 0-100), submitted scores will be considered in relation to the top scores of the grading system in that country. Applicants will also be asked to list the names and email addresses of three individuals who are willing to write online letters of recommendation. They will be contacted after you have submitted your application for review. A personal statement is required for all applications. We no longer accept GRE scores for the master's or doctoral programs in EEB. A writing sample is required for MS and PhD SUS Track applicants. Writing samples must be sole-authored works, and can consist of a term paper, a recent publication (in submission or press), or other work demonstrating the student's writing and analytical abilities.

Advising: Applicants to the EEB MS ECO Track are expected to have contacted potential advisors and should list these faculty in their application. Prospective EEB MS SUS Track students will be assigned an advisor in their first semester but are encouraged to identify and suggest an advisor in their application. All EEB PhD applicants are expected to have contacted potential advisors and should list these faculty in their application.

Language Proficiency: International applicants who do not speak English as their native language must take a language proficiency exam and upload their scores upon application. In line with the general UB grad school requirements, the EEB Program accepts TOEFL, IELTS, PTE,

CAE, and CPE scores. In order to be considered for funding through a Teaching Assistantship (TA), international applicants should have a TOEFL iBT score of at least 100, or higher, an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher, a minimum PTE Academic score of 55 with no individual section sub-score below 50, or a score above 200 on the Cambridge English Scale (=Grade A for CAE, Grade C for CPE).

Fees: The graduate application fee is \$75 U.S. (payable online or by check or money order made payable to the University at Buffalo). Applicants to master's-level tracks who reside in New York State are eligible to apply for an application fee waiver courtesy of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, provided they have an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 and meet the admissions deadlines. Out-of-state residents may request an application fee waiver and are granted on an individual basis. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies for additional information on this process.

Deadlines: For fall admissions, the EEB MS deadline is May 1st. The EEB PhD deadline is January 1st for funding consideration, and May 1st is the final application deadline. For spring admissions, the EEB MS deadline is December 1st. The EEB PhD deadline is December 1st. Funding considerations are made on a case-by-case basis for Spring admissions depending on availability.

Continuing UB Studies: Students completing the EEB MS (ECO or SUS Track) may wish to continue into the EEB PhD program of similar Track. In these instances, the student must submit a formal application to the PhD program for review, however application fees will be waived. The UB College of Arts and Sciences also offers an automatic "provisional acceptance to a master's degree" program to UB undergraduate seniors in the College who are on track to complete their degrees with a 3.0 GPA. Note that provisional acceptance in EVS applies only to the EEB MS SUS Track and the MSL. Given the transdisciplinary nature of these programs, provisionally accepted students will be accepted from any undergraduate degrees in the College.

Provisional Acceptance: The UB College of Arts and Sciences runs a program for its undergraduate students that offers provisional acceptance to certain master's programs within the college. The MSL and the EEB SUS Track participates in the program. With this program, students are not required to submit transcripts, letters of recommendation, application fees, and other materials required as part of the standard admissions process. To be eligible, students are reviewed in the fall semester of their final undergraduate year and must be on track to have completed 90+ credits by the end of their program, as well as have an overall GPA of 3.0 or more. However, the EVS Graduate Committee may not grant students who meet this base requirement provisional admissions if the student's record shows evidence of misconduct as defined by the Graduate School's policies, if the student has faced disciplinary actions in their courses, or other factors that suggest the student is not prepared for graduate-level work. In these instances, the student is still welcome to apply using the standard admissions process.

MS in EEB

Coursework – Ecology (ECO) Track

The EEB MS ECO Track typically requires 2+ years to complete coursework, research project and the thesis. Students are required to complete **30 credit hours**, 18 of which are formal courses. Students are required to complete **EVS 553 Foundations of Environment and Sustainability (1 credit)** and **EVS 554 Professional Development Seminar (1 credit)** in their first two semesters; as well as enroll in **EVS 555 Graduate Colloquium (1 credit)** each semester for their first two years.

Students are also required to take a minimum of **three Ecological Dimensions** courses from the below menu (note that course offerings change semester-to-semester):

EEB Ecological Dimensions

- APY 546: Physical Anthropology Special Topics
- APY 547: Behavioral Research Methods
- BIO 500: Bioinformatics/Genome Analysis
- BIO 525: Developmental Evolution
- EVS 509: Advanced Ecology
- EVS 511: Marine Ecology
- EVS513: Ecology of Invasive Species
- EVS 545: Restoration Ecology
- GEO 515: Conservation Biogeography
- GEO 545: Restoration Ecology
- GEO 546: Global Change Ecology
- GEO 547: Advanced Earth System Science
- GEO 548: Stream Restoration
- GEO 549: Fluvial Geomorphology
- GEO 570: Integrated Environmental Management
- GLY 528: Geologic Hazards & Risks
- GLY 558: Macroevolution
- GLY 569: Biogeochemistry and Ecosystems Ecology
- PSY 634: Animal Behavior
- PSY 640: Animal Communication

The purpose of the requirement is to promote interdisciplinary training, and the three courses must be distributed across three different departments. Students are also expected to acquire appropriate quantitative skills. Students are expected to design a program with their adviser that best fits their needs and interests. Therefore, various courses can be chosen throughout departments to fulfill the formal course credit requirements.

Coursework – Sustainability Studies (SUS) Track

The EEB MS SUS Track requires 36 hours of coursework, typically completed in 2+ years. Students are required to complete **EVS 501 Fundamentals of Sustainability (3 credits)**, **EVS 553 Foundations of Environment and Sustainability (1 credit)** and **EVS 554 Professional**

Development Seminar (1 credit) in their two semesters; as well as enroll in **EVS 555 Graduate Colloquium (1 credit)** each semester for their first two years. Students must take an approved qualitative and/or quantitative research methods class relevant to their field during their first year in preparation for their thesis work. To promote interdisciplinary training, students are required to take a minimum of **one course (3 credits)** from the **Ecological Dimensions menu above**, and **2 courses (6 credits)** from the **Social Dimensions menus below** (with option to substitute a course with advisor approval). Note that course offerings change semester-to-semester.

EEB Social Dimensions

- APY 619: Political Ecology
- COM 640: Risk Communication
- GEO 503: Environmental Governance
- GEO 560: International Development
- EEH 521: Global Health
- EEH 550: Environmental Health
- EVS 543: Business, Sustainability, and Society
- EVS 489: Sustainability & Social Theory
- EVS 560: Leadership in Sustainability
- EVS 570: International Organizations, Gender and Sustainability
- EVS 589: Emerging Technologies & Sustainability
- EVS 589: Community, Resilience to Natural Disasters
- GEO 560: International Development
- IDS 550: Decolonial Participatory Action Research
- IDS 551: Methods in Global Indigenous Studies
- PSC 666: Environmental Politics
- SOC 546: Environmental Sociology
- SOC 511: Social Stratification
- URP 508: Race, Class, Gender and City
- URP 520: Affordable Housing in Practice
- URP 544: Planning with Uncertainty
- URP 568: Environmental Planning and Policy
- URP 588: Indigenous Planning
- URP 604: Food Systems Planning
- URP 605: Built Environment and Health

Students are expected to design a program, along with their adviser, that best fits their needs and interests. This can be accomplished through coursework, independent study, or other experiential learning. In addition to courses listed in the Ecological Dimensions and Social Dimensions menus, the following is a list of additional courses frequently offered at UB:

EEB Additional Course Suggestions

- APY 508: Qualitative Research Methods
- APY 546: Physical Anthropology Special Topics

- APY 547: Behavioral Research Methods
- ARC 545/546: Technical Methods in Ecological Practices
- BIO 500: Bioinformatics/Genome Analysis
- BIO 525: Developmental Evolution
- CIE 500: Economic Perspectives on Engineering Sustainability
- CIE 569: Hazardous Waste Management
- COM 626: Political Communication
- COM 629: Entertainment Education for Health Promotion and Social Change
- COM 676: Advanced Stats for Social Science Research
- COM 678: Misinformation & Society
- COM 686: Science Communications
- COM 686: Social Media & Society
- ECO 512: Environmental Economics
- ENG 503: Professional Digital Communication
- GEO 503: Survey Methods for Human Geographer
- GEO 505: Univariate Statistics in Geography
- GEO 506: Geographical Information Systems
- GEO 508: Research Methods in Geography
- GEO 509: Multivariate Statistics in Geography
- GEO 577: Environmental Statistics
- GEP 599: GIS for Environmental Modeling
- GLY 519: Environmental Geophysics
- GLY 529: Analysis of Geological Data
- GLY 560: GIS for Earth Scientists
- GLY 565: Environmental Remote Sensing
- GLY 579: Carbon Reduction Challenge
- MGC 601: Organizational Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainability
- MGG 637: Business Management Implications for Sustainable Development
- SOC 504: Intro Stats for Social Sciences
- SOC 525: Race & Ethnic Relations
- SOC 606: Social Research Methods
- SOC 607: Multiple Linear Regression
- URP 508: Race, Class, Gender and the City
- URP 522: Economic Development Planning
- URP 538: Economic Concepts and Contexts
- URP 578: Environmental Planning Methods for Sustainability
- URP 675: Advanced Qualitative Research
- Any graduate elective approved by program director

Advisement

Successful placement with an advisor is a pre-condition for admission to the ECO Track. This advisor must be approved to advise EEB master's-level students. Students in the SUS Track are not required to choose an advisor upon entering the program. A faculty member, approved to advise EEB master's-level students and matched with the student's research interests, will be

assigned to them upon entry. It is highly recommended that applicants familiarize themselves with faculty research areas to consider alignment with potential advisors for thesis supervision.

No later than the end of their second semester, the student and faculty advisor will form an advisory committee for the purpose of selecting courses, overseeing, and ultimately approving the student's research. The committee must contain a minimum of three faculty, two of whom must be EEB-designated faculty members. The third may be internal to UB, or an external member with relevant expertise. Each semester the advisory committee evaluates the student's progress toward their degree and reports that progress to the Director of Graduate Studies. While every effort is made to place students with an ideal advisor, students should know that they are always free to change advisors and/or committee members if issues arise. However, it is strongly suggested that the student first work to resolve any issues and consult with their advisor, their committee, and the Director of Graduate Studies before making changes as this may also delay their degree completion timeline.

Project/Thesis Proposal

Every student in the EEB MS program must conduct a 6-credit culminating research activity as the last stage of their degree. Students can choose to complete all 6 credits in a single semester or complete the project over the course of 2 semesters with approval of their advisory committee. ECO Track students have the option of completing either a culminating project or thesis. SUS Track students may only complete the thesis.

- The thesis is a scholarly paper that makes an original contribution to the field. The thesis paper generally includes a literature review, research questions or hypotheses, description of the research itself, and an analysis of results.
- The project is generally more applied than that for a thesis. It encompasses a rigorous research activity designed and executed by the student as a way of solving or studying a problem, with a writeup of their activities.

Before starting the research and no later than the end of the second semester, the student should submit a formal project/thesis proposal to the advisory committee. The proposal must have a clear research question or questions, a work plan or tasks outlined to answer these questions and contain an anticipated timeline to complete the project. Students will exhibit critical thinking and an understanding of the major steps of the scientific approach and research design before starting the research. The proposal assures that both the student and the advisory committee know and agree upon the nature and scope of the research project.

This written proposal should begin with an abstract of no more than 300 words and should describe the anticipated research in no more than 7 pages including figures and references. In it, the student will present the problem and discuss the plan, objective, approach, and scope of the proposed project. should plan to submit their proposal for review at least four weeks prior to the end of the semester. In reviewing the proposal, the faculty will consider whether the student is adequately prepared for the proposed research. Advisors will make suggestion for

improvement on a timeline that allows the student at least two weeks for any revisions prior to the end of the semester.

Project/Thesis Research

Once the project/thesis proposal has been approved, the student will be enrolled in a EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance course and the student may proceed with their research. The advisory committee will monitor progress through a meeting each semester in which the student summarizes the status of the thesis. As the project/thesis nears completion, the student will prepare a full draft of their final deliverables in a style chosen by the advisory committee. The committee members may accept the final deliverables as submitted, or request revisions. The final meeting of the committee to determine grading can only be scheduled after the deliverables have been accepted by the committee.

Project/Thesis Completion and Public Presentation

In their final semester, the student should expect to submit a full draft of the project/thesis deliverables to the committee within one month of the end of the semester. Students who provide drafts too late for adequate committee review risk having their graduation delayed if extensive revisions are required by committee members. The committee is expected to return the full draft to the student with comments within 2 weeks of receiving the full draft. It is also the responsibility of the student to schedule two important dates: 1) the public research presentation, and 2) the meeting of the committee to determine project/thesis grading.

The **public research presentation** is a gathering of department faculty, students, and other interested members of the University community. Students must submit a title, abstract (300 words or less), names of committee members, the time and date of the presentation to the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the presentation so that public notice can be posted in the Department. The presentation may be held at any point in the semester after a full draft of the project/thesis deliverables has been submitted to the committee, but no later than 2 weeks prior to the Graduate School's deadline for submitting all materials for degree completion.

The **meeting of the full committee** must also be scheduled, no later than 2 weeks prior to the Graduate School's deadline for submitting all materials for degree completion. At this time, the committee will review the final deliverables of the project/thesis and determine if further work is needed. A grade of Pass, Conditional Pass (revisions are required, but achievable within the time needed to meet the Graduate School's submission deadlines), or Fail will be communicated to the student and to the Graduate Program Coordinator. A passing grade will be determined by a unanimous vote of the committee that the dissertation meets standards in the discipline. All members of the committee are required to attend the meeting. In the event the student fails to meet requirements, the student will be permitted a second formal opportunity to meet with the committee after issues have been addressed. No more than two opportunities to meet with the committee for formal grade consideration are allowed. Failure after the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

For projects, after their successful completion of the project/thesis, the student must fill-in and submit the “Culminating Project Completion Form for Masters in EEB or Sustainability.” For the thesis, the student will need to submit the “M-Form for Verifying Completion of Graduate Program Requirements for Master’s Degrees With Thesis and All Doctoral Degrees with Dissertation.” In addition, if accepted as a thesis, the student must electronically submit their thesis to the Graduate School via the ETD Administrator site.

Final Steps for the MS

The guidelines regarding completion of the degree and application for graduation can be complicated. It is highly recommended that the below steps are reviewed several months before graduation to avoid any complications. All graduating students need to verify that the Graduate School has their correct graduation date on record. The student should also confirm with the Graduate Program Coordinator that all degree requirements (required courses, total credits, milestones, etc.) have been met. The responsibilities of the student, thesis chair, and the graduate program administration are listed below.

Candidate

- Make sure that the Graduate Program Coordinator has a properly executed copy of any form submitted directly to the Graduate School.
- Notify the Graduate Program Coordinator of the time and date of the planned public presentation at least two weeks in advance so room arrangements can be reserved and a two-week public notice of the event be posted.
- Circulate a copy of the presentation abstract to all department faculty members with an announcement of the date, time and place of the public presentation. This will be done at least two weeks in advance of the date.
- Schedule the full committee meeting within 2 weeks of the Graduate School final submission deadline.
- Complete the project/thesis as required by the committee.
- If the student is completing a project: Before your conferral date your department must complete the appropriate culminating experience milestone in HUB.
- If the student is completing a written thesis: Submit final, properly formatted thesis to the Graduate School by following the Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) instruction. Also complete the M-Form in coordination with the Thesis Chair.

Thesis Chair

- Prepare appropriate forms indicating that the dissertation has been approved and that the candidate passed dissertation requirements. If the student is completing a written thesis, this includes the “M-Form for Verifying Completion of Graduate Program Requirements for Master’s Degrees With Thesis and All Doctoral Degrees with Dissertation”.
- Make sure that the Graduate Program Coordinator retains a copy of any forms (to be included in the student file) which are submitted directly to the Graduate School.
- Help coordinate departmental activities related to the process.

Graduate Program Coordinator

- Maintain the records in the student file verifying that the various requirements for graduation have been met.
- Arrange a time and place for the scheduled presentation to take place, and to publicize it.
- Provide the committee chair with the appropriate approval forms.

Director of Graduate Studies

- Certify to the Graduate School that all departmental requirements for the degree have been met.

Suggested Timelines

Below is a suggested timeline for the degree. Timelines will vary depending on individual circumstances, such as if students choose to expedite their timelines by taking additional credits earlier in their program. Note, however, that more credits also mean more work, and graduate-level courses can be very demanding. Students are advised to overload only when necessary and consider doing so after their first semester in order to get adjusted to the program.

ECO Track	
Semester	Curriculum
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 553 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 10-12 credits of formal coursework• Identify project advisor/committee
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 554 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 10-12 credit hours of formal coursework• Write and submit project/thesis proposal
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit) and EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)• Project/thesis-related activities
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit) and EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)• Complete and defend project/thesis

SUS Track	
Semester	Curriculum
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 501 (3 credits), EVS 553 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 9 credits of formal coursework

2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 554 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 12 credits of formal coursework• Identify project advisor/committee• Write and submit project proposal
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit) and EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)• Thesis-related activities
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit) and EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)• Complete and defend thesis

PhD in EEB

Coursework – Ecology (ECO) Track

In addition to meeting the required 72 credit hours, students are required to complete **EVS 553 Foundations of Environment and Sustainability (1 credit)** and **EVS 554 Professional Development Seminar (1 credit)** in their first two semesters; as well as enroll in **EVS 555 Graduate Colloquium (1 credit)** each semester until they are advanced to Candidacy (i.e., upon completion of their qualifying examination), and complete **at least 16 additional hours of formal courses**.

Students are also required to take a minimum of **three courses (9 credits)** from the **Ecological Dimensions course menu** (menus are shown in the EEB MS requirements above). The purpose of the requirement is to promote interdisciplinary training, and the three courses must be distributed across three different departments. Students are also expected to acquire appropriate quantitative skills. Students are expected to design a program, along with their adviser, that best fits their needs and interests. Therefore, various courses can be chosen throughout departments to fulfill the formal course credit requirements.

Coursework – Sustainability Studies (SUS) Track

In addition to meeting the requirement of 72 credit hours, students are required to complete **EVS 501 Fundamentals of Sustainability (3 credits)**, **EVS 553 Foundations of Environment and Sustainability (1 credit)** and **EVS 554 Professional Development Seminar (1 credit)** in their first two semesters; as well as enroll in **EVS 555 Graduate Colloquium (1 credit)** each semester until they are advanced to Candidacy (i.e., upon completion of their qualifying examination), and **complete at least 16 additional hours of formal courses**.

Note that if a PhD student already took EVS 501, EVS 553, or EVS 554 as part of their previously being enrolled in the MSL, Sustainability Advanced Certificate, or EEB MS programs, they are not required to take these courses again. Courses of similar intent will be identified and substituted with the guidance of their advisor such that the student meets their required credit goals.

To promote interdisciplinary training, students are also required to take a minimum of **one**

course (3 credits) from the Ecological Dimensions menu and 2 courses (6 credits) from the Social Dimensions course menus (menus are shown in the EEB MS requirements above), with option to substitute a course with advisor approval. Note that course offerings change semester-to-semester.

Students are expected to design a program, along with their adviser, that best fits their needs and interests. This can be accomplished through coursework, independent study, or other experiential learning. In addition to courses listed in the Ecological Dimensions and Social Dimensions menus, courses frequently offered at UB are shown in the MS requirements above under **EEB Additional Course Suggestions**.

Advisement

Successful placement with a primary advisor is a pre-condition for admission to the PhD program. No later than their third semester (second semester for students entering with a pre-existing approved master's degree), the student and their advisor will form an advisory committee for the purpose of conducting the qualifying exam and overseeing the student's dissertation research. The committee will have at least three faculty members, one of whom will be its chair (typically the student's advisor) who will have primary responsibility for directing the nature of their qualifying exams and dissertation research. All three members must be UB graduate faculty. The chair and at least one other member of the committee must be EEB-approved faculty members. Additional committee members from external institutions are optional. Under most circumstances, the committee that conducts the qualifying exams with the student will be the same committee that works with the student on their dissertation. Additional members from outside the university may be added by mutual consent of the student and other committee members. However, this typically occurs during or after the dissertation proposal writing stage when the nature of any needed outside expertise is identified.

Constituting the committee is a professional decision made by students in consultation with their chair and the prospective members. Students should select their committees with care, considering the contribution, expected time commitment, and appropriateness of each member invited to participate, given the research the student will pursue. Faculty are under no obligation to participate as members of any student committee and students should keep in mind that faculty may resign from committees for various reasons. Similarly, students are free to replace or add committee members, but these issues should be handled directly and professionally. Changes to committee composition may delay completion of work. Changes, while at the discretion of the student, should always be discussed with their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Once the Dissertation Committee is constituted, its composition can be changed at any time at the request of the student who must notify the Director of Graduate Studies, submit a new Faculty Academic Advisor/Committee Members form to the Graduate Program Coordinator, and submit a petition to "Change Expected Graduation Term or Amend the ATC".

Qualifying Exams

Qualifying exams ensure that students have adequate foundational knowledge in core areas of their discipline(s) before they advance to the next phase of doctoral training. All PhD students are required to pass qualifying exams before they write and defend their dissertation proposals.

Exams should be taken between the student's 3rd and 5th semester of the program. If exams are not passed by the end of the 7th semester (5th semester for students granted the full 18 transfer credits for a pre-existing master's degree), the student will be dismissed from the program. If unexpected or exceptional circumstances prevent a student from taking the qualifying examinations by the suggested time, they can petition the Director of Graduate Studies for a one-semester postponement of their exams. Students must compile and submit their field topics and reading lists to their committee by the end of the semester immediately prior to the semester in which they intend to conduct their exams.

Format – ECO Track

The format of the background examination may be written or oral or some combination of the two at the advisory committee's discretion. Prior to the semester in which the exam is to be taken, the committee will meet with the student and communicate the format and scope of the exam to the student.

Format – SUS Track

Students in the SUS Track are examined on multiple fields, where a "field" is defined as a cohesive body of primary academic literature (articles, books, book chapters, review essays) that bounds an intellectual, empirical, and/or conceptual sub-domain of academic interest, where understanding that body of literature enables one to perform research with expert knowledge. Fundamentally, the fields can be thought of as defining the intellectual spaces in which the student anticipates making intellectual contributions with their research. Three examination "fields" are required. With the approval of the Graduate Committee, students entering the program with a relevant pre-existing master's degree can receive credit towards one examination field, providing that that intended field aligns with the student's prior master's degree subject-matter.

Given the transdisciplinary nature of the program, field topics and reading lists will vary widely and will be determined by the student, faculty advisor, and committee. Reading lists are expected to predominantly come from literatures already encountered by the student in their coursework. However, some additional literature may be needed within exam reading lists to round out areas of knowledge important to the student's research plans. The best way a student can prepare for a successful qualifying exam is to take coursework relevant to their intended topical areas.

During the exam semester, students should dedicate significant time to independently reading, synthesizing, and writing. Students can enroll in up to 6 credits of self-guided coursework in the semester in which they prepare exams. The final deliverable is a critical review, one for each

field, in which the student presents a synthesis of ideas explored in that field's reading list. The length for each exam is expected to be approximately 7,500 words, not including references. The added benefit of these extended literature reviews is that they can be used by the student in their dissertation.

Evaluating the Exams

Final drafts of the examinations are to be submitted to the student's committee at least 2 weeks prior to the end of the semester in order to provide adequate time for review. Following the review, the committee will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss their exams and to communicate the results, which are one of three grades. The exams are graded as a whole, and not field-by-field.

- **Pass:** The student demonstrated a capacity for PhD-level research, independent thought, and the ability to critically evaluate key works, issues, problems, and debates in the subject area. The passing exam discusses relevant works at a level of detail that demonstrates that they have been read and understood; shows critical thinking about the readings and synthesizes diverse perspectives; and is organized well and written coherently.
- **Conditional Pass:** The student failed to meet one or more of the passing criteria for the written exam as judged by a majority of the committee, but the committee believes the exam may be redeemed with minor revisions. The scope and timeline of revisions will be determined by the committee but is not allowed to extend beyond the end of the exam semester. If major revisions are needed that require longer than this time, the committee should consider the exam a "Fail" and completed in the following semester.
- **Fail:** Student failed to meet multiple passing criteria to the extent that the committee agrees the exam cannot be redeemed through revisions alone or exhibited a poor understanding of fundamental facts and theories.

Failure of the exam will be rectified by re-examination after a minimum interval of three months, but no later than by the end of the semester following the one in which the student first took the exam. The committee may set conditions, including taking formal courses or doing specialized tutorial work with faculty members prior to retaking the exam. Within seven days of the completing the exam, the faculty advisor must inform the student in writing of the grade achieved and the nature of any prescribed remedial work and/or reexamination if required. A copy of this correspondence will also be sent to the Graduate Program Coordinator to be placed in the student's file. A student may take their qualifying exam only twice. Failure of the second attempt will result in loss of funding and removal from the PhD program.

Dissertation

The goal of the dissertation is to ensure that each student demonstrates substantial independent scholarship. The dissertation has many potential forms. It can resemble a scholarly monograph, where the entire dissertation is a unified text that discusses a single topic or research question in depth. Or it can be a set of several interrelated research papers (generally three), suitable in quality to the discipline for submission to a peer review journal, with each paper representing one aspect of the dissertation research. In this format, the body chapters

are “sandwiched” by an introductory chapter that establishes the dissertation theme, and a conclusion chapter that synthesizes the body chapters. Other dissertation formats may incorporate material practice, or ways to report on applied and participatory-action research. The nature of the dissertation will ultimately be determined based on the student’s interests and with the guidance of their advisor and committee. The dissertation chapters must be sole-authored original work. Content from co-authored work in which the student is lead-author may be considered for conclusion at the discretion of the committee.

Dissertation Proposal

Students must prepare a dissertation proposal that outlines their dissertation topic, discussing its theoretical relevance, research question/hypothesis, data sources, and research design/methods in accordance with the type of dissertation they intend to pursue. Students are strongly encouraged to review criteria for various grants offered by the NSF, NEH, NIH, and other funding organizations made available to dissertation-stage graduate students. Often, dissertation proposals can be written in a format that can be then used to apply for these grants, but application to these grants must be planned in advance in order for grant award dates to align with the timing of the student’s dissertation research.

Proposal Defense

Students must also present their dissertation proposals to their committee. The proposal defense should be held by the end of the semester immediately following successful completion of the qualifying exams, but no later than the end of the second semester following completion of the exams or the student will be dismissed from the program. If unexpected or exceptional circumstances prevent a student from defending the proposal by the suggested time, they can petition the Director of Graduate Studies for a one-semester additional postponement.

The proposal will be provided to the committee no less than 1 month before the scheduled defense meeting and the committee will return the proposal to the student with comments no less than 2 weeks before the meeting date. During the defense, the student will be expected to present the research proposal and address the committee’s comments that can include questions on the background, rationale, design, methodology and analysis of the proposed research. The committee will meet in private briefly towards the end of the defense to determine the assigned grade. The student will then be invited to return to the meeting, at which time the proposal defense grade will be communicated to the student.

The proposal may be assigned a grade of: Pass, Pass with Revisions (minor revisions), or Fail. If the student receives a Pass with Revisions, the student has 30 days to revise the proposal in response to committee comments. The revised proposal will then be given a final grade of Pass or Fail. If a student receives a grade of Fail, they may re-defend the dissertation proposal, without penalty, before the end of the next semester. Students who fail a proposal defense twice will be dismissed from the PhD program. Once the proposal passes, the student should fill out the Proposal Defense Form, signed by the dissertation committee chair and all dissertation

committee members, certifying that the proposal has passed. Student must also provide Graduate Program Coordinator an electronic copy of the approved proposal. Once these forms are completed, the doctoral student advances to “candidacy” and can begin their dissertation work.

Dissertation Research

The committee will meet periodically with the student (as determined by the committee) to oversee progress of the student’s research and report their progress in evaluations each semester. The committee chair has primary responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the student, but the onus is on the student to make sufficient progress. To receive a PhD from the University at Buffalo, the student must be registered for at least one credit hour during the semester of graduation. Students planning to graduate should notify the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Coordinator at least one semester ahead of time so that there are no unanticipated problems with meeting graduation requirements. Completing the dissertation requires careful planning; keep in mind that it is inappropriate to expect committee members to be fully available during June, July, and August for formal activities related to dissertation preparation, except in extenuating circumstances.

Dissertation Completion and Public Presentation

In their final semester, the student should expect to submit a full draft of the dissertation (all chapters) to the committee within two months of the end of the semester. Students who provide the draft dissertation too late for adequate committee review risk having their graduation delayed if extensive revisions are required by committee members. The committee is expected to return the full draft to the student with comments within 2 weeks of receiving the full draft. At that time, it is the responsibility of the student to address issues identified by the committee, as well as schedule two important dates: 1) the public research presentation, and 2) the meeting of the committee to determine dissertation grading.

The **public research presentation** is a gathering of department faculty, students, and other interested members of the University community. Students must submit a title, abstract (300 words or less), names of dissertation committee members, the time and date of the presentation to the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the presentation so that public notice can be posted in the Department. The presentation may be held at any point in the semester after a full draft of the dissertation has been submitted to the committee, but no later than 2 weeks prior to the Graduate School’s deadline for submitting all materials for degree completion.

The **meeting of the full committee** must also be scheduled, no later than 2 weeks prior to the Graduate School’s deadline for submitting all materials for degree completion. At this time, the committee will review the final draft of the dissertation and determine if further revisions are needed. A grade of Pass, Conditional Pass (revisions are required, but achievable within the time needed to meet the Graduate School’s submission deadlines), or Fail will be communicated to the student and to the Graduate Program Coordinator. All members of the

committee are required to attend the meeting. In the event the student fails in to meet requirements, the student will be permitted a second formal opportunity to meet with the committee after issues have been addressed. No more than two opportunities to meet with the committee for a formal review of the dissertation for grade consideration are allowed. Failure after the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program. Only when the committee unanimously agrees that the work is satisfactory, indicated by signatures from each committee member on the M-Form, will the M-Form be signed by the Director of Graduate studies certifying that the work meets the standards for conferral of the PhD. In addition, the student must electronically submit the dissertation to the Graduate School via the ETD Administrator site.

Final Steps for the PhD

The guidelines regarding completion of dissertations and application for graduation can be complicated. It is highly recommended that the below steps are reviewed several months before graduation to avoid any complications. All graduating students need to verify that the Graduate School has their correct graduation date on record. The student should also confirm with the Graduate Program Coordinator that all degree requirements (required courses, total credits, milestones, etc.) have been met. The responsibilities of the student, dissertation chair, and the graduate program administration are listed below.

Candidate

- The format of the dissertation must conform to the requirements of the Graduate School. Follow the Graduate School's Guidelines for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation and Submission early in the writing process for reference, and again when preparing the final draft of the dissertation.
- Make sure that the Graduate Program Coordinator has a properly executed copy of any form submitted directly to the Graduate School.
- Notify the Graduate Program Coordinator of the time and date of the planned public presentation at least two weeks in advance so room arrangements can be reserved and a two-week public notice of the event be posted.
- Circulate a copy of the dissertation abstract to all department faculty members with an announcement of the date, time and place of the public presentation. This will be done at least two weeks in advance of the date.
- Schedule the full committee meeting within 2 weeks of the Graduate School final submission deadline.
- Complete the dissertation as required by the committee.
- Submit final, properly formatted dissertation to the Graduate School by following the Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) instruction.
- Complete the M-Form in coordination with the Dissertation Chair.
- Complete the two required Doctoral Degree Recipients Surveys.

Dissertation Chair

- Prepare appropriate forms indicating that the dissertation has been approved and that the candidate passed dissertation requirements. Primarily this is the "M-Form for

Verifying Completion of Graduate Program Requirements for Master's Degrees With Thesis and All Doctoral Degrees with Dissertation".

- Make sure that the Graduate Program Coordinator retains a copy of any forms (to be included in the student file) which are submitted directly to the Graduate School.
- Help coordinate departmental activities related to the process.

Graduate Program Coordinator

- Maintain the records in the student file verifying that the various requirements for graduation have been met.
- Arrange a time and place for the scheduled dissertation presentation to take place, and to publicize it.
- Provide the dissertation chair with the appropriate approval forms.

Director of Graduate Studies

- Certify to the Graduate School that all departmental requirements for the PhD have been met.

Suggested Timeline

Below are suggested timelines for the degree, one for students entering without and with a pre-existing master's degree. Timelines will vary depending on individual circumstances, such as if a student must maintain full-time status with 9 credits or 12 credits, or if students choose to expedite their timelines by taking additional credits earlier in their program. Note, however, that more credits also mean more work, and graduate-level courses can be very demanding. Students are advised to overload only when necessary and consider doing so after their first semester in order to get adjusted to the program.

ECO Track - Without pre-existing master's degree	
Semester	Curriculum
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 553 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 10-12 credits of formal coursework
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 554 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 10-12 credit hours of formal coursework• Advisory committee formed
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit) and 9-12 credits of formal coursework
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit) and 9-12 credits of coursework (eligible for 6 credits of exam/proposal prep credits)• Complete exams by end of the semester
5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3-6 credits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete dissertation proposal and defense by end of the semester
6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Complete and present dissertation by end of semester

ECO Track - With pre-existing master's degree	
Semester	Curriculum
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 553 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 10-12 credits of formal coursework
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 554 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 10-12 credit hours of formal coursework • Advisory committee formed
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 555 (1 credit) and 9-12 credits of coursework (eligible for 6 credits of exam/proposal prep credits) • Complete exams by end of the semester
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-6 credits • Complete dissertation proposal and defense by end of the semester
5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and present dissertation by end of semester
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SUS Track - Without pre-existing master's degree	
Semester	Curriculum
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 501 (3 credits), EVS 553 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 6-9 credits of formal coursework
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 554 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 9-12 credits of formal coursework
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 555 (1 credit) and 9-12 credits of formal coursework • Advisory committee formed
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 555 (1 credit) and 9-12 credits of formal coursework • Exam topics and reading lists approved by end of the semester
5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 555 (1 credit), 9-12 credits of coursework (eligible for 6 credits of exam/proposal prep credits) • Complete exams by end of the semester
6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-6 credits • Write and defend dissertation proposal
7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Dissertation-related activities
10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits) • Complete and present dissertation by end of semester

SUS Track - With pre-existing master's degree	
Semester	Curriculum
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 501 (3 credits), EVS 553 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 6-9 credits of formal coursework
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVS 554 (1 credit), EVS 555 (1 credit), and 9-12 credits of formal coursework

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory committee formed
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit), 9-12 credits of coursework• Exam topics and reading lists approved by end of the semester
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 555 (1 credit), 9-12 credits of coursework (eligible for 6 credits of exam/proposal prep credits)• Complete exams by end of the semester
5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3-6 credits• Write and defend dissertation proposal
6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)• Dissertation-related activities
7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)• Dissertation-related activities
8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 569 Graduate Research Guidance (1-6 credits)• Complete and present dissertation by end of semester

MA in Sustainability Leadership (MSL)

Description

In the MSL program, students will master the knowledge and techniques required to work in a wide range of professional sustainability positions. The program can prepare students for further graduate work (PhD) or research, teaching, and administrative positions in both the public and private sectors as well as academia. Other positions/careers that this program is well suited to prepare students for include sustainability consultancy, sustainability management, and sustainability-related analysis.

Admissions

Admission is based on the strength of the student's academic record, letters of recommendation, as well as language proficiency (for international applicants). The MSL program is competitive, and it is suggested that applicant transcripts have a 3.0 GPA. For international applicants with different grading systems (e.g., 0-100), submitted scores will be considered in relation to the top scores of the grading system in that country. Applicants will also be asked to submit two letters of recommendation, one of which should be a former professor or mentor from an academic institution. A statement of purpose is required which should describe the applicant's educational goals, professional interests, and how the program will help achieve the applicant's long-range goals. International applicants who do not speak English as their native language must take a language proficiency exam and upload their scores upon application. In line with the general UB Graduate School requirements. The EEB Program accepts TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, CAE, and CPE scores. Accepted students will subsequently be

required to submit official copies of these documents (transcripts and language proficiency scores, if appropriate) before enrolling. We no longer accept GRE scores for the MSL.

Typically, students are only accepted to begin the MSL program in the fall semester. January 31st is the application deadline for the M.A. in Sustainability Leadership. Applications received after January 31st will be considered on a rolling basis until capacity is reached, at which point admissions close. To maximize your chances for admission, please submit your application prior to January 31st. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. The graduate application fee is \$75 U.S. (payable online or by check or money order made payable to the University at Buffalo). Applicants to master's-level tracks who reside in New York State are eligible to apply for an application fee waiver courtesy of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, provided they have an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 and meet the admissions deadlines.

Coursework

The program requires at least 30 credit hours of courses over a minimum of three semesters. The courses will prepare students to lead organizations as they adopt sustainable practices and develop plans to minimize environmental impact. Coursework from the Advanced Sustainability Certificate may be applied to the MA. The program can be taken at the student's own pace. In collaboration with the program Director, students will customize a set of courses based on educational or work experience, professional aspirations, and project content. Each semester a list of courses offered across the University related to Sustainability will be provided to help students choose courses for the upcoming semester.

In addition to the two required core courses (SSN 501 and 601), students choose one course out of a menu of courses in each of the below topic areas. Note that course offerings change semester-to-semester.

- Environmental/ Ecological
- Social/ Cultural/ Human
- Economics/ Business
- Tools and Data Analysis
- Leadership
- Communication

Required Courses (6 credits)

- SSN 501: Fundamentals of Sustainability
- SSN 601: Sustainability Professional Skills Capstone

It is highly recommended that students take SSN 501 in their first semester. SSN 501 is only offered in the Fall semester. Students must complete the SSN 501 before they will be permitted into SSN 601, which is only offered in the Spring semester. Finally, students must complete both SSN 501 and SSN 601, as well as have a signed proposal from the student's Project advisor before being permitted to enroll in the Project Course (EVS 695).

Pick One Environmental / Ecological Course (3 credits)

- ARC541: Environmental Systems 1

- ARC 573: Environmental Systems 2
- ARC 575: Environmental Systems 3
- ARC/URP 566: Urban Design: Built Environment Case Studies
- CIE 569: Hazardous Waste Management
- EEH550: Environmental Health
- EVS 509: Advanced Ecology
- EVS 511: Marine Ecology
- EVS513: Ecology of Invasive Species
- EVS 545: Restoration Ecology
- GEO 515: Conservation Biogeography
- GEO 545: Restoration Ecology
- GEO 546: Global Change Ecology
- GEO 547: Advanced Earth System Science
- GEO 548: Stream Restoration
- GEO 549: Fluvial Geomorphology
- GEO 570: Integrated Environmental Management
- GLY 528: Geologic Hazards & Risks
- GLY 558: Macroevolution
- GLY 569: Biogeochemistry and Ecosystems Ecology
- IE 521: Sustainable Manufacturing
- URP 573: Land Use and Physical Planning
- URP 578: Environmental Planning Methods
- Any graduate elective approved by program director

Pick One Social / Human / Cultural Course (3 credits)

- APY 619: Cultural Topics: Political Ecology
- ARC 627/628: Ecological Practices Intellectual Domain
- EEH 521: Global Health
- EEH 550: Environmental Health
- EVS 560: Leadership in Sustainability
- EVS 570: International Organizations, Gender and Sustainability
- EVS 549: Sustainability & Social Theory
- EVS 589: Emerging Technologies & Sustainability
- EVS 589: Community, Resilience to Natural Disasters
- GEO 560: International Development
- IDS 550: Decolonial Participatory Action Research
- IDS 551: Methods in Global Indigenous Studies
- PSC 666: Environmental Politics
- SOC 511: Social Stratification
- SOC 546: Environmental Sociology
- URP 508: Race, Class, Gender and City
- URP 520: Affordable Housing in Practice
- URP 544: Planning with Uncertainty
- URP 568: Environmental Planning and Policy

- URP 588: Indigenous Planning
- URP 604: Food Systems Planning
- URP 605: Built Environment and Health
- Any graduate elective approved by program director

Pick One Economics Course (3 credits)

- ARC 545/546: Technical Methods in Ecological Practices
- CIE 500: Economic Perspectives on Engineering Sustainability
- ECO 512: Environmental Economics
- EVS 543: Business, Sustainability and Society
- MGC 601: Organizational Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainability
- MGG 637: Business Management Implications for Sustainable Development
- URP 522: Economic Development Planning
- URP 538: Economic Concepts and Contexts
- Any graduate elective approved by program director

Pick One Leadership Course (3 credits)

- EVS 560: Leadership in Sustainability
- MGB 607: Motivation and Leadership
- MGB 625: Power and Influence
- MGB 670: Team Building
- MGI 617: Workplace Performance Management
- Any graduate elective approved by program director

Pick One Communications Course (3 credits)

- ENG 503: Professional Writing and Digital Communication
- ENG 510: Technical Communication
- ENG 520: Professional Writing
- LAI 505: Scientific Writing
- COM 540: Persuasion and Social Influence
- COM 626: Political Communication
- COM 629: Entertainment Education for Health Promotion and Social Change
- COM 640: Risk Communication
- COM 678: Misinformation & Society
- COM 686: Science Communications
- COM 686: Social Media & Society
- NGC 520: Scientific Writing
- SWS 595: Agency Grant Writing
- Any graduate elective approved by program director

Pick One Tool and Data Analysis Course (3 credits)

- APY 508: Qualitative Research Methods
- APY 547: Behavioral Research Methods
- CIE 532: Statistical Methods in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering

- COM 518: Statistics I
- COM 676: Advanced Stats for Social Science Research
- GEO 503 Survey Methods for Human Geographers
- GEO 505: Univariate Statistics in Geography
- GEO 506: Geographical Information Systems
- GEO 509: Multivariate Statistics in Geography
- GEO 653: Advanced Remote Sensing
- GEP 599: GIS for Environmental Modeling
- GLY 519: Environmental Geophysics
- GLY 529: Analysis of Geological Data
- GLY 560: GIS for Earth Scientists
- GLY 565: Environmental Remote Sensing
- GLY 579: Carbon Reduction Challenge
- SOC 504: Intro Stats for Social Sciences
- SOC 606: Social Research Methods
- SOC 607: Multiple Linear Regression
- URP 578: Environmental Planning Methods for Sustainability
- URP 675: Advanced Qualitative Research
- Any graduate elective approved by program director

Advisement

Students will seek out a Project advisor in their area of interest and at least one other committee member to guide them through the process of completing the final project. The Project advisor and committee members may represent a diversity of departments across UB. Changes in committee membership require EVS Departmental approval. It is highly recommended that students find a project advisor and committee member(s) by the end of their second semester (especially for full-time students). We encourage students to begin corresponding with potential advisors during their first semester to determine whether the advisor can chair or serve on a graduate student's committee.

Project Proposal

Before being enrolled in the project course (EVS 695), the student must submit a project proposal that is approved by their advisory committee. The project proposal must have a clear research question or questions, a work plan or tasks outlined to answer these questions, and contain an anticipated timeline to complete the project. Students will exhibit critical thinking and an understanding of the major steps of the scientific approach and research design before starting the research. The proposal assures that both the student and the advisory committee know and agree upon the nature and scope of the research project. Please see the MSL Project Proposal Form to complete the proposal (link on EVS website).

This written proposal should begin with an abstract of no more than 300 words and should describe the anticipated research in no more than 7 pages including figures and references. In it, the student will present the problem and discuss the plan, objective, approach, and scope of

the proposed project. In considering the proposal, the faculty will consider whether the student is adequately prepared for the proposed research. Students should plan to submit their proposal for review at least four weeks prior to the end of the semester. Advisors will review the proposal and make suggestions on a timeline that allows the student at least two weeks for any revisions prior to the end of the semester.

Project

Every student is required to complete a 6-credit project, prepare a project deliverable and may choose to present the results of the project to the faculty and students in the program. They can choose to complete all 6 credits in a single semester or complete the project over the course of two semesters (with approval of their advisory committee). Once the project proposal has been approved, the student will be enrolled in the project course for the upcoming semester. Typically, the student will have regular meetings during the semester with their major advisor and other members of their committee as appropriate for completing the project. Projects range from individual research to the work of small groups interacting with governmental, non-governmental or private entities. Students can investigate across a wide variety of disciplines and propose solutions to real-world socio-ecological problems. Students have the choice of working independently or as part of a team. The goal of a project is mainly for the student to deepen their knowledge about a particular aspect of sustainability. It is different from a thesis in that a project is not necessarily a novel contribution to the scientific field but could be an impactful analysis or applied research-related activity.

Project Completion

Upon completion of the project, the student's Project advisor must submit a "Project Completion Form" by emailing it to the MSL Graduate Program Coordinator.

Final Steps for the MA

The guidelines regarding completion of the degree and application for graduation can be complicated. It is highly recommended that the below steps are reviewed several months before graduation to avoid any complications. All graduating students need to verify that the Graduate School has their correct graduation date on record. The student should also confirm with the Graduate Program Coordinator that all degree requirements (required courses, total credits, milestones, etc.) have been met. The responsibilities of the student, dissertation chair, and the graduate program administration are listed below.

Candidate

- Make sure that the Graduate Program Coordinator has a properly executed copy of any form submitted directly to the Graduate School.
- If your committee requires a presentation, notify the Graduate Program Coordinator of the time and date of the planned public presentation at least two weeks in advance so room arrangements can be reserved and a two-week public notice of the event be posted.

- If your committee requires a presentation, circulate a copy of the presentation abstract to all department faculty members with an announcement of the date, time and place of the public presentation. This will be done at least two weeks in advance of the date.
- Schedule the full committee meeting within 2 weeks of the Graduate School final submission deadline.
- Complete the project/thesis as required by the committee.
- Before your conferral date your department must complete the appropriate culminating experience milestone in HUB.

Advisory Committee Chair

- Prepare appropriate forms, including the project assessment rubric, indicating that the project has been approved and that the candidate passed project requirements.
- Make sure that the Graduate Program Coordinator retains a copy of any forms (to be included in the student file) which are submitted directly to the Graduate School.
- Help coordinate departmental activities related to the process.

Graduate Program Coordinator

- Maintain the records in the student file verifying that the various requirements for graduation have been met.
- Arrange a time and place for the scheduled presentation to take place, and to publicize it, if needed.
- Provide the committee chair with the appropriate approval forms.

Director of MSL

- Certify to the Graduate School that all departmental requirements for the degree have been met.

Suggested Timeline

Below is a suggested timeline for the degree. Timelines will vary depending on individual circumstances, such as if students choose to expedite their timelines by taking additional credits earlier in their program. Note, however, that more credits also mean more work, and graduate-level courses can be very demanding. Students are advised to overload only when necessary and consider doing so after their first semester in order to get adjusted to the program.

Semester	Curriculum
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SSN 501 (3 credits) and 9-12 credit hours of formal coursework
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SSN 601 (3 credits) and 9-12 credit hours of formal coursework• Identify project advisor/committee• Write and submit project proposal

3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVS 695 (3 credits) and 3 credits hours of formal coursework (if needed)• Project-related activities and completion
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (If needed) EVS 695 (1-3 credits) + Project-related activities and completion

Advanced Certificate in Sustainability

Description

Fundamental environmental and sustainability issues include the ecological and evolutionary processes that control populations, species and communities; anthropogenic effects on the physical, chemical and biotic environments; and the cultural values and societal actions necessary to foster sustainable interactions with the natural world. Addressing these issues requires a transdisciplinary approach that spans the natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities. In this advanced certificate, students:

- Study alongside professors and students from different academic backgrounds.
- Strengthen competencies in the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability as they relate to your own academic specialty.
- Gain broad exposure to integrative systems thinking and practice, and relevant techniques in your chosen field.
- Graduate as a well-rounded candidate for professional opportunities or additional academic study.
- Are prepared to lead companies, non-profits, or governmental organizations toward adopting more sustainable practices and affecting local-to-global change.

Admissions

Admissions for the Advanced Certificate in Sustainability are only accepted for fall admission. April 15th is the application deadline for the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Sustainability. Applications received after April 15th will be considered on a rolling basis. To maximize your chances of admission, please submit your application prior to April 15th. If you are a current graduate student in a master's or doctoral program in the College of Arts and Sciences, you may be exempted from completing a full formal application. If you are a current graduate student at UB, but outside of the College, you may be granted admission to the advanced certificate upon completing the online application.

Coursework

This advanced certificate, consisting of 15 graduate credit hours, serves as a locus for interactions among a diverse array of students and faculty throughout the university and initiate transdisciplinary scholarly activities. The curriculum consists of two core courses: Fundamentals of Sustainability (SSN 501) and Professional Skills Capstone (SSN 601), as well as five elective courses: one environmental, one social, and one economic, chosen from amongst the courses listed in the MSL course categories and listings noted above. Note that many students often do not have to take all five additional courses if they have taken similar courses

for their major or other degree programs. Permission from the Director of the program is needed to approve any course exceptions.

Advisement

No additional advisor is prescribed within the scope of the certificate program beyond what is required by the student's home department. Course recommendations may be provided by the MSL program Director.

Suggested Timelines

No timeline to completion is prescribed by the advanced certificate beyond what is required by the student's primary program.

Financial Assistance

Teaching and Research Assistantships

Graduate Teaching Assistantship (TAs): TA positions are awarded on a competitive basis based on transcripts, letters of recommendation, and departmental teaching needs. Decisions about TA awards are determined by the Director of Graduate Studies and the GAC in further consultation with the DUS. For continuing TAs, previous performance is also considered. TA appointments generally commence in the fall semester and are made for the academic year, but occasionally TAs become available in the spring semester. TA positions generally provide a tuition scholarship, stipend, and cover health insurance for the contract period. TAs should consult their contract for exact dates and benefits. Only doctoral-level students are eligible for TA's. TA positions require 20 hours of work a week unless otherwise noted.

Graduate Research Assistantships (RA): Research assistantships are available through sponsored grants received by individual faculty members. Benefits, such as full tuition scholarship, stipend, and health insurance van with RAs and sometimes include summer research support. RAs should consult their contract for exact dates and benefits of the position. Applicants for graduate study are automatically considered for these assistantship positions. However, research assistantship awards are granted at the sole discretion of the faculty member and generally require the student to establish a satisfactory research relationship with the faculty member whose grant will provide the funding. Both doctoral and master's level students are eligible for RA's, but priority is generally given to doctoral students. The hour-per-week commitment of RA positions vary and are outlined in the contract.

Graduate Assistantships (GA): Occasionally the Department receives funds for graduate students to assist with departmental tasks not directly related to TA or RA duties. They may involve tasks such as maintaining laboratory equipment, planning events, and supporting departmental administration and staff with managerial tasks. Applicants for graduate study are automatically considered for these assistantship positions when available. Both doctoral and master's level students are eligible for GA's, but priority is generally given to doctoral students.

The hour-per-week commitment and benefits associated with these positions vary and are outlined in the contract.

Special Awards: The Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship, the UB Presidential Fellowship, and the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Fellowship are also available through the university to graduate students. These multi-year awards are “top offs” added to a TA or RA position based on academic promise and require departmental nomination during the graduate application process. Information about these and other funding opportunities are available through the EVS Director of Graduate Studies and the UB Office of Fellowships and Scholarships.

University Financial Assistance: Aside from RA and TA positions, graduate students may apply for financial aid. Applications for financial aid are administered through Student Financial Services. You may qualify for the National Direct Student Loan, College Work Study, and a variety of other loans and scholarships.

Outside Assistance: Advanced graduate students are encouraged and expected to pursue opportunities for external grants and fellowships in aid of dissertation research, and to seek other means (e.g. internships) through which they may combine financial support for the latter stages of the program with activities useful in their dissertation research and appropriate to their longer-term career interests. Numerous notices of such opportunities are posted or otherwise brought to students' attention. However, students should take initiative in finding these resources.

Tuition Scholarships

While stipend eligible positions (TA/RA/GA) often also come with tuition support, tuition scholarships are granted separately by the university and Department as outlined in their tuition scholarship offer letter. The following guidelines apply to all tuition scholarships:

1. Tuition scholarship funds may be applied only to academic year tuition costs; any graduate fees or summer tuition costs are not covered by this scholarship.
2. Students receiving a graduate/teaching assistantship are required to register for a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester to maintain full-time student status. Advanced graduate students at the candidacy stage may be able to reduce this requirement by filing the Certification for Full-Time Status form to be considered full time at less than 9 credit hours.
3. The tuition scholarship may be renewed for a maximum of eight (8) semesters or the minimum credit hours required for the Ph.D. degree, whichever is less. Students may petition the Dean of the Graduate School for extensions to these time limits, but they should be aware that, if approved, the tuition scholarship extension is only for up to one (1) credit hour of tuition.
4. MS students are required to pay all college fees. Nonpayment of these fees at the required time will result in the assessment of late fees.
5. Domestic students must apply for New York State Residency. This process should begin immediately when moving to Buffalo. If you do not comply with this requirement to establish New York State residency, you are personally responsible for the difference

between the in-state and the out-of-state tuition charges. For the most accurate information on the process of establishing residency in this state, contact the Office of Student Accounts.

6. Although students receiving teaching or research stipends are customarily granted a tuition waiver, they are not guaranteed.

Assistantship Rules and Requirements

Expectations: A limited number of assistantships are available for students. The Graduate Committee expects students who are supported through the department to perform their duties diligently and effectively. Renewal of assistantships is not automatic, and an assistantship may be terminated during the semester if a student does not satisfactorily meet expected criteria. The Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Committee review the performance of all teaching assistants during and at the end of each semester. Assistantship positions are considered as a regular job, which requires keeping track of time and tasks, and reporting your work to a supervisor.

Residency: Students must be in residence at UB to receive TA and GA assistantships. RA location requirements are negotiated with the advising faculty member, but are also generally expected to be in residence at UB unless otherwise stated. TAs should always consult with the professor for whom they are serving as a TA in cases of absence from class or inability to perform other duties previously agreed upon. Apart from medical and family emergencies, TAs/RAs/GAs that wish to take more than a week away from their duties during term time for any reason, including to attend professional meetings or to conduct research, must seek the approval of their supervising faculty member well in advance of departing and prior to making any commitments related to their leave. If a TA/RA/GA is unable to obtain the necessary approval for reasons they believe unfair, they may appeal to the DGS and Graduate Committee.

Work Commitments: The State of New York expects all students holding a normal full-time appointment to devote twenty (20) hours per week to their assistantship duties. Teaching assistant work assignments are variable and may consist of teaching laboratory sections or assisting in lectures (e.g., preparing and grading exams, preparing materials, and other duties assigned by the instructor or their representative). Some assistants may be assigned to a particular professor to aid them in various phases of their course preparation. Others may be split across courses and professors as needed. Research assistants work in collaboration with faculty in a range of capacities including reviewing literature, collecting and analyzing data, interacting with study subjects, and writing or presenting of research findings. These RA and GA duties are at the discretion of the supervising faculty member.

Semester Leave: TAs and GAs are allowed one semester of continuing assistantship support without obligation to assistantship-related work duties. This leave does not apply to RAs whose funds derive from external sponsored projects. It is strongly suggested this one-semester leave be taken in the semester in which the student is writing/defending the dissertation proposal but may be taken earlier with permission from their faculty advisor and the DGS. Students must

enroll in the necessary number of credits to maintain full-time enrollment status during the leave.

Outside Employment: It is the policy of the Graduate School that students holding assistantships at the University of Buffalo are not allowed to hold jobs outside of the university, on the assumption that they will not have sufficient time for employment beyond the responsibilities required of an assistantship. These restrictions only apply for time period stated in assistantship contracts (i.e., students may seek outside employment during summer months if not also on an assistantship). The Department Chair may grant exceptions to this policy in cases of unusual economic necessity or other extraordinary circumstances.

English Language Requirement: University policy requires that all international students whose first or dominant language is not English and who hold assistantships (TA/RA/GA) must take the Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (SPEAK). SPEAK is offered 4 times a year at UB. All international students from non-English speaking countries must pass the SPEAK Test no later than the end of their first year of study in the graduate program. Funded students who have not passed this requirement by the end of their first year of study will not have their funding renewed. A student who does not pass the SPEAK test must enroll in appropriate courses in the English Language Institute as a condition of continuing registration. Hence, students are urged to take the SPEAK Test soon after their arrival at the university.

Training: The UB Office of Curriculum, Assessment, and Teaching Transformation offers a virtual orientation workshop prior to the beginning of classes in the fall semester to assist graduate students in the development and enrichment of their teaching and learning skills. TAs are expected to attend this training session in the first year of their contract.

Timesheets and Paychecks

Teaching Assistants will be given a timesheet to complete and sign on the 1st of each month. Research Assistants will be required to fill out an on-line timesheet using the E-Time Reporting system. Paychecks are distributed in the Department office. University regulations require that unclaimed checks be returned to University Payroll. TA's receive checks every other Wednesday, RA's receive direct deposits every other Friday, and Student Assistants are paid every other Thursday. Complete a Direct Deposit Form to have these deposited into a bank account of your choice. If you have questions about your paycheck, contact UB Human Resources.

Health Insurance

Graduate student TA/RA/GA's who elect to enroll in the Student Employee Health Insurance Program (SEHP) or The Research Foundation Graduate Student Employee Health Plan are required to attend a health insurance orientation session conducted by the Human Resources Department. For information and to register for an orientation session please consult Human Resources.

Grounds For Suspension of Assistantships

Assistantships may be suspended for any of the following reasons:

1. A grade point average below 3.0 for two subsequent semesters.
2. Consistently working less than the number of weekly hours required in their contract.
3. Having a full or part-time job outside the Department unless otherwise authorized by the Department Chair.
4. Unsatisfactory performance in the completion of assistantship duties.
5. Assistantships are suspended automatically for student who enter probationary status or are dismissed from the program.

Assistantship Suspension Procedure

On grounds other than academic performance, the first approach to addressing problems should always be one-on-one communication between the student and the relevant supervisor. The student and supervisor may also approach the Director of Graduate Studies to mediate the situation. If such communication does not result in a resolution of a problem, following procedure should be followed:

1. All complaints concerning the TA/RA/GA must be written and given to the Director of Graduate Studies and a copy given to the Department Chair.
2. The TA/RA/GA in question should be notified in writing that a complaint has been filed.
3. The TA/RA/GA should talk to their supervisor or advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies immediately if they believe the complaint is unjust and/or to determine whether the problem can be rectified.
4. If the problem remains unresolved, it must be referred to the Graduate Committee. Both parties must be given the opportunity to state their cases.
5. Suspension must be made by a majority vote of the Graduate Committee and the Department Chair.
6. The Department must send notice of suspension to the TA/RA/GA in writing.

Travel Awards

The department may provide funding for PhD students who are making presentations (either papers or on a panel) at conferences or have been invited to participate in a competitive workshop or seminar. Students receiving funds from other sources to travel are not eligible for additional funding from the department. The maximum amount of funding is \$200 in a budget year, subject to availability of funds. For conferences traveling 300 miles or less from Buffalo \$100, and for travel over 300 miles it is \$200. If a student has received only \$100, they may apply for an additional \$100 for a total of \$200 in one budget year. To request funds, students must submit to the DGS and Chair either a copy of the program with the student's name listed, or a copy of the letter accepting the student's paper for presentation. Upon returning from the conference, the student must submit original receipts in at least the amount approved (either \$100 or \$200) and a copy of the cover of the program and the page with the student's name to the Department Administrator for processing.

Credits and Coursework Policies

Undergraduate Courses

Graduate students may NOT take undergraduate courses for graduate credit except certain 400 level courses by special Graduate School Petition (form available in department office) unless the class is also dual-listed as a 500 level graduate course. Graduate students may, however, find it desirable to audit selected undergraduate courses if their background in that area is weak.

Non-Department Courses

Students may take courses in other departments as a part of the regular program. Such enrollments should be discussed with the Faculty advisor. Enrollment in graduate seminars in other departments may require the advance permission of the instructor. See The Graduate Program Coordinator for the form that should be signed by the advisor and returned to the Graduate Program Coordinator for The Director of Graduate Studies to approve & sign.

Independent Study/Readings Courses

An independent study course is defined as individualized student work under the guidance of a faculty member. These courses are intended to pursue topics that are not currently offered through regular coursework, or to add depth or breadth to a student's training. Independent study courses should be used sparingly and not be used as substitutes for pursuing work already available in the UB curriculum. Independent studies should be arranged with the instructor before registering: prepare a written statement of the topic to be covered for the semester, such as the methodology, the expected results, a bibliography, and the form of evaluation of work. An "Independent Study" form must be completed, signed by the instructor, and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, and placed in the student's file by the end of the semester you are registered for an independent study/readings course. The Graduate School requires this statement to be submitted together with the M.A. or Ph.D. Application to Candidacy forms.

Transfer Credits

Students may transfer credits for graduate coursework completed elsewhere, with the agreement of their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies, pursuant to the Policies and Procedures of the Graduate School. Transfer credits may only be used towards their degree's required elective credits and not towards required core courses and seminars. A maximum of 18 hours of transfer credit can be granted towards the 72-credit requirement of the PhD, and a maximum of 6 hours of transfer credits can be granted toward the master's. Only those graduate courses completed with grades of "B" or better are eligible for consideration as transferable credit. Courses with grades of Satisfactory (S) or Passing (P) are not transferable unless the transcript specifically states they are equivalent to a "B" or better. Credits earned in correspondence courses may not be transferred. A student entering the PhD program with a pre-existing master's degree relevant to their intended area of study is considered eligible to receive up to 18 hours of transfer credit without need for individual course review. Transfer credits should be brought to the Director of Graduate Studies' attention in the student's first

semester for approval in order to avoid confusion about the student's credit responsibilities in their program.

Coursework More Than 10 Years Old

By the policies of the Graduate School, courses more than 10 years old, whether transfer courses or UB courses, cannot be counted toward the requirement of the degree. For such courses to be included in a degree program, they must be petitioned at the time of the student's admission to the program or at the time the credits are considered by the department. If these credits have been included in an approved extension of time limit petition, they are valid only until the expiration date of that petition. Accordingly, any further extension of an approved time limit for degree completion will require, concurrently, a re-petition for approval of these older courses. Requests for approval of courses more than 10 years old must be petitioned through the Graduate School Petition to Use Historical Coursework (More Than 10 Years Old) Toward a Current Graduate Degree Program School Petition form. Appropriate justification of how the courses relate to the student's program, and how the student has kept current with the subject matter of such courses, must be provided.

Enrollment Status

Continuous Registration and Time Limits

Continuous registration is required in each fall and spring semester until all degree requirements have been completed. Per Graduate School policies, master's degrees must be completed within four years (8 semesters) from the student's first registration date in that master's degree program. Doctoral degrees must be completed within seven years (14 semesters) from the student's initial matriculation in that doctoral program. Time limit extensions may be granted to the student by the Graduate School through the Graduate Program Coordinator and with the approval of the Graduate Committee.

Full-Time Status

Full-time status is considered 12 credit hours; for graduate students with a TA/RA/GA appointment, full-time status is considered 9 credit hours. Students with financial aid may be required to maintain full-time status. Students may take more than the minimum credits to meet their degree requirements as needed. Per Graduate School policies, students may register for no more than 19 credit hours per semester. Students seeking to take more than 19 credits must provide reason to the DGS for why they feel they should be approved for the additional credits. If approved at the departmental level, the request will be forwarded to Graduate School. In considering such requests, the Graduate School will not grant the 19-credit override to any student who has less than a 3.0 overall average, or who carries two or more incomplete (I) and/or resign (R) grades.

Certification of full-time status: After certain milestones in their program, students can become eligible for "certification of full-time status" where they may reduce their number of enrolled credit hours while still maintaining full-time status. At this point, they can reduce to as few as 1 credit, but students should consult with their faculty advisor and the Graduate

Program Coordinator to ensure their remaining timeline will satisfy their degree requirements. MSL and EEB MS students become eligible in the semester immediately following the approval of their project proposal. EEB PhD students become eligible in the semester immediately following successful application to candidacy (acceptance of their dissertation proposal). EEB PhD students that have completed their qualifying exams may request approval for up to 2 semesters of certified full-time status prior to their application to candidacy if they have satisfied enough credits to justify the reduction. Note that all students should track their progress closely to ensure they will reach the total necessary credit hours for their degree. This is particularly the case for EEB PhD students entering their program without a preexisting master's degree, who must reach 72 credit hours to graduate.

Part-Time Status

Most students in our programs are full-time students. In certain cases, students may be admitted on a part-time basis or convert to part-time status in the course of their study. Note that part-time students are NOT eligible for student loans or TAP because they cannot be certified as full-time. Furthermore, part-time students are NOT eligible for TA/GA/RA appointments. Students admitted on a part-time basis must complete all requirements of their degree within the maximum allowable time limit of the Graduate School. The timing of completion of additional requirements will be handled by advisement with the student's faculty advisor with the approval of the Graduate Committee.

Leave of Absence

Timely completion of degree requirements may be complicated by unexpected events in student's lives. In such instances, a leave of absence may be granted. A student must petition for a leave of absence in writing, explaining the reason for the request and the anticipated date of return. Before applying for a leave of absence, the student should discuss the matter with their faculty advisor, committee chair, and the Director of Graduate Studies. After Department approval, the leave request is sent to the Graduate School, which will make the final decision and notify the student. Students with approved leaves of absence will remain in the graduate program, although they are neither enrolled in courses nor registered for course hours. Leaves of absence are granted on an annual basis; extensions can be granted but are not automatic. Note that the Graduate School specifies that a Leave of Absence is for only one year. In extenuating circumstances, it may be possible to petition for a second year of leave. Students approved for a leave of absence remain liable for any outstanding tuition and fee charges.

Conditions for reinstatement from leave are ordinarily set when the leave is granted and include completion of outstanding work. Petitions for reinstatement will be considered by the Graduate Committee and the Graduate School. Students who remain unregistered for more than one year without an approved extension of their leave will be removed from the program. Such students who are removed from the program when a leave of absence expires may reapply for admission to the Department under current admission criteria if they wish to continue their graduate studies at some future date.

Evaluation of Student Performance

Grades

The grade of “B minus” is considered the minimal satisfactory grade in graduate courses. All graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA throughout their coursework and must have at least a 3.0 GPA both in core courses and in their overall program to receive the M.A. & PhD degrees.

Incompletes

Students are expected to complete coursework on time. A grade of ‘I’ (i.e. Incomplete) may be given only in those instances in which the student has not been able to complete all of the assigned projects and/or examinations in a course due to illness or other unforeseeable and compelling circumstances. This should be discussed with the instructor, not assumed.

Incompletes are not available to students who have not satisfactorily completed the other academic requirements of the course. Whether Incompletes are given at all, and what the deadline is for finishing all coursework, is partly the prerogative of the instructor, but is also governed by university and department policy. Faculty members should indicate at the beginning of each course, preferably in the syllabus, what their policy will be with respect to assigning a grade of Incomplete. A grade of Incomplete cannot be assigned for dissertation guidance, theses or projects in which continuing registration is required by the University. Faculty should award the grade of “S” prior to completion of this work.

University policy allows students two semesters (beyond the semester during which the seminar is taken) to complete the work necessary to convert the Incomplete to a letter grade. A Leave of Absence does not stop the clock on deadlines for Incompletes. If course requirements are not completed during that time period, the Incomplete will automatically be changed to an Unsatisfactory (U) grade. Note that, for students who are operating under the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), financial support may be endangered if they do not complete coursework on time. For TAP regulations bearing on Incompletes, contact the Office of Financial Aid to Students.

If there is a valid reason for waiving the deadline for removing an incomplete grade, the student may petition the Department’s Graduate Committee prior to the deadline. (Appropriate petition for an incomplete grade extension of time is available from The Graduate School website. The petition should include: (1) Reason the grade cannot be removed within the specified time period; and (2) Permission of the instructor who originally gave the Incomplete and of the Chair of the instructing department. Once an Incomplete is changed to a “U” grade, the course, if offered again, may be repeated for credit.

Good Standing and Probation

According to the Graduate School policy, “good academic standing” is defined as “a student who is making acceptable progress toward a graduate degree or advanced certificate.” All graduate students are expected to remain in good academic standing throughout the entire course of their study. Any graduate student who fails to remain in good academic standing will

be placed on academic probation for the subsequent fall or spring term. Probation refers to a process by which students are informed of deficiencies in their progress towards the degree. Students are formally notified of probationary status and the steps they must take to remedy that. Failure to remedy probationary status will result in dismissal from the program or loss of funding. The Graduate Committee may decide that a student will not continue in the program for the following reasons:

1. A GPA below 3.0 for two subsequent semesters.
2. Grades below B (including B-) in any required course. Students who earn a grade below B (including B-) when retaking a required course will be dismissed from the program. A grade of C in a required course is the minimal passing grade for a course that may count towards credit for meeting the requirements for the MA. However, a C grade does not meet standards for graduate work and does not count towards meeting credit hour requirements for the PhD. Grades of C- or lower do not count towards meeting credit hour requirements for either the MA or the PhD.
3. Achieve a term grade point average (GPA) of a 3.0 (B) or better with no U or F grades earned, and complete at least 67 percent of their attempted credits each term.
4. Accumulation of incomplete grades. Having two incomplete grades simultaneously may result in probationary status. Four incompletes may be the basis for dismissal from the program
5. An unsatisfactory annual review which results in probation, if the basis for the unsatisfactory review and probation are not remedied on schedule.
6. Failing program components (i.e., thesis, qualifying examinations, dissertation proposal, dissertation completion).
7. Inability to form a thesis/dissertation committee.
8. Inadequate progress towards meeting degree requirements.
9. Failure to maintain continuous registration in the program.
10. Exceeding Graduate School or Department time limits.
11. Failing to comply with all other policies, requirements, and procedures of the Department and the Graduate School.

Academic Integrity

The Department will adhere to the Graduate School's policies regarding academic integrity and follow the Graduate School's procedures for handling suspected cases of academic dishonesty. According to Graduate School policy, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: 1) submitting previously submitted work to fulfill an academic requirement, 2) plagiarism, 3) cheating on an exam or other assignment, 4) falsifying academic materials such as notes, lab materials, reports or submitting another person's work as one's own, 5) forgery, alteration or misuse of any University of official document, record of ID, 6) procuring, altering or accepting exams or other class materials without consent of the instructor, and 7) buying or selling of academic assignments, or inappropriate assistance in the preparation of any assignment. See details of definitions, procedures and possible sanctions in the Graduate School's Policy and Procedures. In addition to these sanctions the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair, in consultation with the Graduate Committee, may impose additional sanctions, including but not limited to dismissal from the Graduate Program.

Tracking Forms

All graduate students complete annual progress reports that help chart their progress through the program and toward their degree. The Academic Program Assessment Report and Program Learning Outcomes (AAPAR/PLO) tracking form will be distributed by the DGS or the Graduate Program Coordinator and must be completed by the end of every spring semester in the student's program. In addition, students must complete the Graduate Student Report Form, distributed directly to students by email by the Graduate School each spring semester.

Grievance Procedures

The Department encourages the prompt resolution of grievances as they arise. At the Department level, informal discussion between the disputants should resolve most issues; students may wish to seek prior advice from their faculty advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, or the Chair. If a formal review is necessary, a written statement of the grievance and grounds for it should be given to the Chair, who will act upon it in accordance with the by-laws of the Department and the regulations of the Graduate School. For additional information consult the Policies and Procedures of the Graduate School.

Graduate Student Organizations

Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU)

The GSEU is the collective bargaining unit for Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Graduate Assistants (GAs) employed by SUNY and paid by the State of New York. All TAs and GAs employed by SUNY are part of the GSEU bargaining unit and pay the union a percentage of their income. However, to obtain full union benefits you must fill out a yellow membership form and return it to a union officer (your department rep, Chief Steward, or Business Agent) or mail it to the address on the form. These forms are distributed at health orientations, GSEU meetings, and general orientation activities.

EVS Graduate Student Association

The EVS GSA is comprised of and governed by graduate students in the Department. It is affiliated with the university-wide Graduate Student Association (GSA). In addition to keeping students posted on departmental and university policies, procedures, and events, the organization assists in planning socials and speaker events. All graduate students are welcome and encouraged to participate in the EVS GSA. Meeting announcements are made through the email listserv.

UB's Graduate Student Association

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the representative body for graduate students at UB. Its two key purposes can be divided into representation and services. Its funds are derived from the Mandatory Student Fee and funds numerous programs and services offered to GSA members and department-level GSA groups.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Well-Being

Discrimination and Harassment

The Department is committed to providing an inclusive, accessible, and safe environment where everyone can learn and thrive. UB's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination and harassment in all aspects of teaching, learning, and all UB activities. Discrimination and harassment are managed by the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Their web site includes information about the investigation process and outcomes. Reporting of discrimination and/or harassment is an act protected from retaliation by UB Policy. Any individual in the UB community, most importantly students, that are impacted by or witness to discrimination or harassment should report it to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The Office will consult with reporters about the process and can accommodate anonymous consulting or reporting. The Office can be contacted by calling (716) 645-2266 or sending a message through their "contact us" web page (<https://www.buffalo.edu/equity.html> and click the "contact us" option in the list of options). To report discrimination or harassment, fill in the "information intake form" on their web site ([here](#)).

Preferred Names and Pronouns

At UB, everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and personal pronouns that correspond to their preferred gender identity. As part of the Department's commitment to inclusion, it is important that all students respect the preferred names and pronouns of fellow members of the UB community. Information about UB policy on personal pronouns policy can be found in the UB Policy Library.

Sexual Violence

UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. Please contact UB's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266 for more information and you have the option of calling that office anonymously if you would prefer not to disclose your identity. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399. UB faculty are mandated to report violence or harassment on the basis of sex or gender; if a student reports an issue to a faculty member of the department, faculty are required to report it to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Students have options for how the situation will be handled, including whether or not they wish to pursue a formal complaint. If the student does not wish to have UB proceed with an investigation, the request will be honored unless UB's failure to act does not adequately mitigate the risk of harm to the student or other members of the UB community. Students also have the option of speaking with trained counselors who can maintain complete confidentiality.

Mental Health

The Department prides itself on being a welcoming environment where mental health concerns can be discussed in private with faculty to find resources and solutions. In addition, Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion offers several helpful programs and services. These can be contacted at Counseling Services: 120 Richmond Quad (North Campus), 716-645-2720 202 Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-5800. Health Services: Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-3316 Health Promotion: 114 Student Union (North Campus), 716-645-2837.

Accessibility Resources

If students have any disability which requires accommodations to enable them to participate in their course of study, please notify the Office of Accessibility Resources. The department will work with the Office and the student to provide arrangements appropriate to their needs.