

**Environmental Science
Graduate Student Handbook
Policies and Procedures for Graduate Students
September 2006**

General Policies Applying to All Students

Upon admission to matriculated status, all students work with the Graduate Advisor on a tentative plan of study. Students pursuing research must identify a faculty advisor by winter term of their first year. Students work with their faculty advisor to finalize their academic plan based on research interests.

M.S. students should submit a plan of study after completion of 9 credit hours, or sooner. Doctoral students should submit a plan of study after completion of 9 credits following their M.S. degree, or sooner. Drexel University has no obligation to approve courses taken prior to the submission and approval of a plan of study (or revised plan of study) on which such courses appear.

The final version of the Plan of Study (Form D-1) must be approved and submitted to Graduate Studies, with the concurrence of the graduate advisor. This change shall be recorded in the student's file. All students who have not already completed the equivalent of the core courses are expected to complete these courses within the first calendar year of their matriculation. This applies to both full time and part time students.

Graduate Student Forms

There are a number of forms (i.e. D1 – D7) that need to be completed as students progress through the program. All forms can be found on the Office of Research and Graduate Studies website at www.drexel.edu/provost/graduatestudies/ under Forms, General Ph.D. Forms. D Forms are primarily used for Ph.D. students, however, M.S. Thesis students also make use of them. Please consult the Graduate Advisor for appropriate forms. All forms must be submitted to the Graduate Advisor prior to being forwarded to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

M.S. Thesis Degree Policies

Most students will have a single faculty advisor who will serve as both an Academic Advisor and a Research Advisor. In some cases, however, these two individuals will be different. The Academic Advisor must always be a full-time Drexel faculty member, and this individual will sign all forms of record for the student's degree. The Research Advisor may be any Drexel full-time faculty member. The appointment of a separate Research Advisor requires the approval of the Director.

Each student must form a M.S. thesis committee composed of three faculty members, including the Research Advisor, within the first academic year. At least one member on the committee must be an Environmental Science faculty member.

The M.S. thesis must be publicly presented. The open presentation will be followed by a closed oral examination by and at the discretion of the M.S. committee. A near final draft of the written thesis must be presented to the committee at least one week before the presentation. The near-final draft must also comply with guidelines set forth in the Drexel Thesis Format outlined on the Hagerty Library website. The fully corrected written thesis must be submitted to the library before graduation clearance.

For the M.S. thesis degree, a minimum of 36 credits of formal coursework (excluding research and independent study) is required. A total of 45 credits for the degree is required.

M.S. Non-Thesis Degree Policies

Students who elect a non-thesis option must complete a total of 48 credits. At least 45 credits of these must be formal coursework.

PhD Degree Policies

A Ph.D. can be pursued in the fields of Environmental Science which includes Environmental Policy in specialties consistent with interests of the Environmental Science affiliated faculty. There is a University 90-credit requirement for the Ph.D. degree. When a post-M.S. student is admitted the University accepts 45 credits from the M.S. degree towards the Ph.D. requirement. The precise balance of course work and research credits will be determined by the student's faculty advisor and committee. In addition to accruing 90 credits, the Ph.D. student must put together (with their research supervisor) a graduate committee (or different committees for different examinations) and take a qualifying examination, a candidacy examination, and defend his/her dissertation. It is the student's responsibility to file the Drexel Ph.D. Forms (D Forms) in a timely manner so that all stages of progress are tracked.

The Ph.D. examination committee composition must follow all University rules and regulations, i.e.:

- the committee must consist of five or more members
- at least three members must be tenure or tenure-track Drexel faculty
- at least one of the committee members must be from outside the Environmental Science affiliated faculty

In addition, at least a majority of the committee must be Environmental Science faculty. In addition, the committees for the qualifying examination and the candidacy exam shall also follow these rules for composition.

A Qualifying Examination shall take place no later than 18 months after the initial matriculation of the student in post-master's status. The function of the qualifying examination is to determine areas of deficiency in suitable time for additional courses to be made a part of the student's Plan of Study.

The committee will be appointed by the student's advisor, upon consultation with the Faculty Advisor, and consist of at least three members.

The qualifying examination will be based upon M.S. and post-M.S. course work and research. The examination will include both oral and written components and will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Students may retake the qualifying examination no sooner than one term following a failure. If the student fails the examination twice, he/she will be required to withdraw from doctoral study.

A Candidacy Examination will be held not later than six months following the qualifying examination. The candidacy exam will consist of a student's preparation of his/her research proposal, and an oral defense of that proposal along with any related material deemed necessary by the committee to ensure that the student is adequately prepared to conduct research. The format of the written proposal should follow that of one of the major funding agencies (e.g., EPA, NSF, NIH), except without page limitation. The intent of the exam is to test the ability to synthesize material, to solve problems, and on ability to complete research and interpretation of results related to the chosen research topic. The oral presentation of the proposal shall be open to the public, with time for questions to the student from the faculty examining committee allowed after the public audience is excused.

Subsequent to passing the candidacy examination, the student will make a written and oral progress report on research to the doctoral committee at regular intervals, at least annually.

The Dissertation Defense will consist of a public defense before the Ph.D. committee and any (and all) interested persons, including faculty, students, and guests. The written dissertation must be presented to the committee at least two weeks before the defense. The fully corrected written dissertation must be submitted to the library before graduation clearance. Students completing a Ph.D. dissertation must comply with guidelines set forth in the Drexel Thesis Format outlined on the Hagerty Library website.

Transfer Credit

Up to 15 semester hours of previous graduate coursework in a related discipline may be accepted as transfer credits for a Drexel graduate degree. The coursework must be no older than 7 years and a grade of A or B must have been received. The student must submit an original transcript of the coursework to the Graduate Advisor, who will in turn submit this with an Advanced Standing Form to SAS.