# ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE MS PROGRAM GUIDELINES and POLICIES

**CHARLES E. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF SCIENCE**

**FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY**

The ES Program oversees the Master’s Degree Program (thesis and nonthesis option), Ph.D Program in Integrative Biology with Concentration in Environmental Science, the BS in Biology to MS in Environmental Science accelerated degree, the Graduate Certificate in Environmental Restoration, and the Undergraduate Certificate in Environmental Science. The guidelines below are only for students enrolled in the MS degree program.

Students are responsible for following all program and University rules and regulations. Students should consult the [University Catalog](http://www.fau.edu/registrar/registration/catalog.php) for university-wide policies and procedures and the [Graduate College](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/) webpage for those policies and procedures prescribed by the Graduate College of FAU. Students should also review the [Graduate College Tuition Benefits Policy](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/tuition-benefits/) for details of the Graduate College’s graduate assistantships and tuition benefits eligibility requirements.

**I. GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

ES students are typically supported through Teaching Assistantships (TA), Research Assistantships (RA), or Fellowships. Teaching Assistantships and Fellowships are awarded by the ES Program whereas Research Assistantships are secured and administered by individual faculty.

TA positions are awarded to ES students on a competitive, annual basis for up to 2 years. Preference is given to thesis students who are already in the Program and making good progress, to top-rated incoming thesis students, to nonthesis students who are in the Program and making good progress, and to top-rated incoming nonthesis students, in the order listed.

*Tuition Waivers*

Students receive a tuition waiver with a TA. Most RA positions also include a tuition waiver. Tuition waivers do not cover student fees. The fee breakdown per graduate credit hour can be viewed under Graduate Resources, [Tuition and Fees.](https://www.fau.edu/controller/student-services/tuition-breakdown/) Master’s students must comply with the policies of the Graduate College regarding their status as full time students in order to be approved for tuition waivers (see the [Tuition Benefits Policy for Graduate Students](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/tuition-benefits/pdf/Tuition_Benefits_Policy_for_Graduate_Students.pdf) for details).

# II. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ALL ES STUDENTS

The ES Master’s degree at FAU requires at least 36 semester credits beyond the baccalaureate degree. A maximum of six graduate credits earned from another institution, or twelve credits while enrolled as a non-degree seeking student at FAU, may be applied toward the ES Master’s degree. All transfer credits must be approved by the student’s thesis committee and FAU’s Graduate College. Students wanting to substitute coursework completed elsewhere for courses in the ES Core Subject Areas must receive approval from both their thesis committee and the course instructor.

Within this document, a *year* is always defined as a series of three consecutive semesters (one Fall term, one Spring term and one Summer term), regardless of whether or not a student is enrolled during the summer semester.

**A. General ES Requirements**

1. Students must complete a minimum of 36 credits of course work with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher**.**

a) Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in order to be eligible for tuition waivers and graduate TAs.

b) Students must achieve a grade of ‘C’ or higher in each graduate course taken. If a student receives a score below a ‘C,’ the course cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. The Graduate College may deny a student subsequent tuition waivers should they fail to achieve a ‘C’ or higher in a graduate level course, or their overall average drops below 3.0.

2. Students must maintain continuous enrollment in order to remain in the program. The University defines continuous enrollment as enrollment in at least one credit during at least two semesters (fall, spring, or summer) of every academic year. Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment lose their eligibility for the degree and must reapply for admission to the program. Students with exceptional circumstances may petition for a leave of absence for up to one year. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment will result in an administrative withdrawal from the university.

3. During the Fall and Spring semesters, students enrolled in 9 credit hours are considered full-time, in the Summer semester students enrolled in 6 credit hours are considered fulltime. **Students enrolled in at least 1 credit of eligible coursework (thesis credit, directed independent research, internship) are also considered full-time during any semester.**

International students with a reduced enrollment should consult with the [Office for International Students and Scholar Services](https://www.fau.edu/isss/index.php) and may need to submit a [Reduced Course Load Form](http://www.fau.edu/isss/forms/pdf/RCLform.pdf).

4. Students must be enrolled in at least one credit during any semester in which they wish to be eligible for a teaching or research assistantship.

5. Students who wish to waive a regulation or requirement of the Environmental Science Program (e.g. course substitution requests) must submit an [Environmental Science Waiver Petition](http://science.fau.edu/envirosci/gradformspolicies.php) to the ES Program on Canvas, and by email to envirosci@fau.edu for ES approval. To waive a Graduate College or university regulation or requirement, students must submit [Form 10 – Request to Waive a University Requirement.](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/docs/FORM_10_Request_to_Waive_a_University_Requirement_Form.pdf) by email to envirosci@fau.edu for ES approval. The ES will forward ES-approved forms to the student and to the Graduate College.

6. All students must submit a Plan of Study (POS) online through the MYFAU Graduate College web portal by the end of their first semester. The POS, **developed in consultation with the sponsor or thesis advisor**, outlines students’ path through the program, specifying which courses will be taken during each semester from matriculation through graduation. Students who do not have a POS on file with the Graduate College by the end of the first semester may become ineligible for further tuition waivers until a POS is submitted. The Graduate College regularly audits student enrollment compared to the approved Plan of Study; students should revise their POS as necessary to ensure that it is consistent with their actual enrollment and expected graduation date.

**B. ES Course Requirements**

1. Environmental Science Colloquium (EVS 6920, 1 Cr): A total of 2 credits are required. No more than 4 credits of EVS 6920 may be counted toward the MS degree. This course is currently offered only in the fall semester. All students must take EVS 6920 during their first fall semester. All students must give a presentation of their thesis or DIS/DIR work at least once during this course.

2. Fundamentals of Environmental Research (EVS 6917, 1 Cr)): 1 credit required. This course is currently only offered in the spring semester. All students should take EVS 6917 during their first spring semester.

3. Research Credits

* Master’s Thesis credits (EVS 6971): Thesis students must complete a minimum of 6 thesis credits. No more than 12 thesis credits may be used to fulfill degree requirements.
* You will not be allowed to register for thesis credits until your [Thesis Committee Approval Form 6](http://fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/docs/Thesis%20Committee%20Approval%20Form%206.pdf) has been approved by the Graduate College. This form must be submitted to the ES Program for approval, and the ES-approved form will be forwarded to you and to the Graduate College.
* Directed Independent Research (EVS 6916)/Directed Independent Study (EVS 6905): Non-thesis students must complete a minimum of 3 DIR credits; non-thesis Master’s students may take a maximum of 3 additional credits of DIS or DIR as electives to fulfill degree requirements. Thesis students may take up to 3 credits of DIR or DIS to fulfill degree requirements.
* Students must register for Thesis and DIR/DIS credit by submitting the [ES Thesis, DIR/DIS Registration Form](http://science.fau.edu/envirosci/gradformspolicies.php) to the ES Canvas site and to the Program Assistant at envirosci@fau.edu.

4. Core Subject Areas

* Thesis students: 12-27 credits, with at least one course from each of the four core subject areas.
* Non-thesis students: 12-30 graduate credits, with at least one from each of the four core subject areas.
* The most recent update of courses in the ES Core Subject Areas can be found in the official [University Catalog.](http://www.fau.edu/academic/registrar/FAUcatalog/science.php#enviro)

5. Electives

* Thesis students: no more than 15 credits of electives will be counted toward the MS degree. Up to 3 combined credits of EVS 6905/EVS 6916 may be counted as electives.
* Non-thesis students: no more than 18 credits of electives will be counted toward the MS degree. Non-thesis students may take a maximum of 6 credits of EVS 6905/EVS 6916, with 3 credits counted as electives.
* The most recent update of ES Elective Courses can be found in the official [University Catalog.](http://www.fau.edu/academic/registrar/FAUcatalog/science.php#enviro)
* Students who want to take a course for elective credit that is not listed in the ES Electives must submit an [Environmental Science Waiver Petition](http://science.fau.edu/envirosci/gradformspolicies.php) to the ES Program requesting a course substitution for credit toward the degree before the beginning of the semester. A revised Plan of Study must then be submitted for ES-approved substitutions.

# III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ES THESIS STUDENTS

**A. Initial course of study**

1. **Formation of Thesis Advisory Committee:**

* The thesis advisory committee (thesis committee) shall consist of at least three members, including the thesis advisor. The thesis advisor and at least two other committee members must be members of the FAU Graduate Faculty and the ES Faculty. The thesis advisor is responsible for advising the student on their initial course of study.
* The thesis committee shall be established before the end of the first semester of the program (Year 1, Semester 1). You will not be allowed to register for thesis credits until your [Thesis Committee Approval Form 6](http://fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/docs/Thesis%20Committee%20Approval%20Form%206.pdf) has been approved by the Graduate College. This form must be submitted to the ES Program for approval, and the ES-approved form will be forwarded to you and to the Graduate College.
* The student’s thesis advisor will be the chair of the student’s thesis committee and will consult with the student to decide on the other members of the thesis committee.
* Ad-hoc participants on the thesis committee need not be Graduate Faculty members, but they may not sign program-related documents for students on whose committees they serve.

# B. Defense of thesis proposal

* **Timing:** It is strongly recommended that the thesis proposal be defendedby the end of Year 1 Semester 2 **but must be defended no later than the end of Year 2 Semester 1.**  Students without a defended and approved proposal by the end of Year 2 Semester 2 may lose their TA eligibility.
* **Requirement for thesis proposal:** Students must hold a meeting with their committee prior to submitting the research proposal to the thesis committee, at least one month in advance of the oral proposal defense. The thesis advisor and thesis committee MUSTagree that the student is ready to defend the thesis proposal. The thesis proposal shall consist of two parts, a written proposal and an oral proposal defense. However, a student’s thesis committee may specify other requirements as part of the proposal defense.
* **Written thesis proposal:** The student shall submit a research proposal for review by the student’s thesis committee **at least two weeks prior** to the oral defense, with a copy to the ES Program Coordinator. Failure to do so may result in a delay of the oral defense. Guidelines for the format and structure of the thesis proposal are outlined in Appendix A: Proposal Guidelines; the thesis committee may unanimously decide on another format. The student must seek guidance from his/her Thesis Advisor with regard to the content of the proposal before submitting it to the thesis committee.
* **Oral thesis proposal defense:** The student will be required to present a proposal defense that is attended by the committee members and is open to the public. This will be followed by a private defense with the thesis committee in which the student’s proposed research and relevant scientific background will be explored in a comprehensive oral format. The committee may request modifications of the written proposal with or without a repeat of an oral defense before final approval.
* It is the student’s responsibility to make a room reservation for the defense through the ES Program Assistant. Room reservation requests must be emailed to the ES Program Assistant at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. Requests should include the following information:
  + The date, time and campus on which the proposal defense will be held
  + Room capacity needs
  + Requests for specific desired locations (e.g. videoconference rooms SC-141, RE-201, DW-421)
  + Equipment needs (e.g. will you use your own laptop or the computer present in the room?)
  + Videoconference needs (e.g. will the event be a videoconference? If so, differentiate between the originating and receiving sites)
    - It is expected that students will ensure that their proposal defense is accessible (via videoconference) on at least three of the four FAU campuses (Davie, Boca Raton, Jupiter, HBOI) where the ES Program resides.
  + Off-campus/external connection/skype needs (with phone numbers and email addresses for appropriate IT staff at non-FAU locations and or individuals wishing to join the meeting via skype or conference call).
* It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the proposal defense announcement is emailed to all ES faculty and students at **least one week prior** to the proposal defense. The announcement should be sent to the ES Program Assistant, who will forward it to the relevant parties. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the proposal defense announcement from being sent out on time, there is a 24 hr grace period. If the announcement is not received by the ES Program Assistant within the 24 hr grace period, the candidate must re-schedule the proposal defense. The candidate must also post physical fliers one week prior to the proposal defense on the campus where the proposal defense will be held and on the campuses to which the defense will be broadcast.
* It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that each member of the thesis committee receives a hardcopy of the [Thesis Proposal Assessment](http://science.fau.edu/envirosci/formspolicies/thesis_proposal_assessment.doc) form at the time of the Proposal Defense; the completed forms should be scanned and emailed by the Thesis Advisor to the [ES Program Assistant](mailto:envirosci@fau.edu). The student is responsible for sending the hardcopy of the [Thesis Proposal Signature](http://science.fau.edu/envirosci/formspolicies/es_thesis_proposal_signature_form.pdf) form, signed by all committee members, to the ES Program Assistant.
* The student must submit the final written Thesis Proposal, as approved by the thesis committee, to the ES Program through the ES Canvas site. The written thesis proposal and the Thesis Proposal Assessment is required for the purpose of ES Program Assessment.
* Students who fail the proposal defense shall have one additional semester to pass. If unsuccessful the second time, the student may be dropped from the ES Master’s Thesis program.

# C. Thesis Research and Thesis Defense

Students must complete a minimum of 6 Master’s Thesis credits before or during the semester in which the thesis defense is scheduled. A maximum of 12 Master’s Thesis credits can be used to fullfil degree requirements, and a student can take no more than 6 dissertation credits per semester.

* Thesis research shall be conducted under the guidance of the student’s thesis committee. Students shall meet with the thesis advisor and other committee members on a regular basis (at least once per semester) as the thesis research proceeds.
* The thesis advisor and the thesis committee **MUST** agree that a student is ready to defend their thesis prior to scheduling of the oral thesis defense.
* A written thesis that follows the FAU Graduate College guidelines for formatting must be submitted for review by the student’s thesis committee with a copy to the ES Program Coordinator **at least one month prior** to the oral thesis defense. (see the Graduate College website for FAU thesis formatting guidelines).
* It is permissible to use published work as thesis chapters, provided their insertion follows thesis formatting guidelines
* The candidate must announce his/her thesis defense at least **two weeks** in advance in the form of a flier sent via email to the ES Program Assistant. The student must also submit the room reservation request for the thesis defense at this time or earlier (providing the same information specified in Section B. Defense of Thesis Proposal).
* The results of the thesis research shall be presented in a public forum to which faculty members, ES students and other interested parties are invited.
* Following the public defense, the candidate shall defend the thesis in a closed meeting with the thesis committee.
* The Program Director or the Associate Director(s) or other assigned representative of the ES Program may serve as an observer at the defense.
* At the meeting following the public defense of the thesis research, the thesis committee shall vote on approval of the thesis. All members of the committee must vote in favor of passing the student; a single dissenting vote will result in the Graduate College denying the student’s application to graduate. *Ad hoc* members do not have a vote on the thesis defense.
* Successful defense of the thesis, completion of all other academic requirements, and formal submission of the approved written thesis to the Graduate College constitute completion of the academic requirements for the ES Master’s Thesis.
* Students who have completed all requirements stated above shall inform the ES Program Coordinator and leave a future contact address.

# D. Application for Graduation

# NOTE: Thesis students will NOT graduate unless the following administrative duties have been fulfilled:

* Students must inform the ES Program at [envirosci@fau.edu](mailto:envirosci@fau.edu) of their intention to graduate and submit an [Application for Degree](https://www.fau.edu/registrar/graduation/deg_app_cert.php) through the FAU Registrar.
* Students must have an approved Plan of Study on file with the Graduate College and their registration status throughout their program must align with their Plan of Study. If necessary, students should revise their Plan of Study prior to graduation such that it reflects their historical enrollment status. Students who do not update their Plan of Study will not pass the final Graduation Audit conducted by the Graduate College and will not be allowed to graduate. Additionally, students may be deemed ineligible for tuition benefits should their Plans not reflect their actual enrollment.
* For FAU thesis formatting guidelines, students must consult the Graduate College [Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Guideline](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php) requirements. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the Graduate College workshops on Thesis/Dissertation formatting.
* Students must consult the [academic calendar](http://www.fau.edu/registrar/registration/calendar.php) and the [Graduate College Graduation Deadlines](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php)for the dates of the following graduation-related deadlines:

1. Application for Degree
2. Revision to Plan of Study (if needed)
3. Submission of thesis, transmittal memo and signature page, electronic thesis upload

# IV. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ES NON-THESIS STUDENTS

**A. Initial course of study**

1. Non-thesis students should consult with their faculty sponsor during the first semester to begin developing a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study should be submitted no later than the end of the first semester, and can be revised in subsequent semesters as needed.
2. During the second semester, non-thesis students begin planning for Directed Independent Study (DIS) research in consultation with their faculty sponsor. DIS work may be conducted under the supervision of any ES faculty member.

**B. Directed Independent Research (DIR)**

1. Non-thesis students must complete a minimum of 3 credits of DIR (EVS 6916). After completing 3 DIR credits, a DIR Report must be submitted to the ES Program through the ES Canvas site, as outlined in Appendix B. The DIR report is required for the purpose of ES Program Assessment.
2. An oral presentation of the DIR project must be made during the second semester the student is enrolled in the ES Colloquium as a course requirement. A poster of the DIR project must be presented at the Annual ES Retreat during the student’s second year in the program.

# C. Application for Graduation

# NOTE: Thesis students will NOT graduate unless the following administrative duties have been fulfilled

* Students must inform the ES Program Coordinator of their intention to graduate and submit an [Application for Degree](http://www.fau.edu/registrar/pdf/Application_for_degree.pdf).
* Students must have an approved Plan of Study on file with the Graduate College and their registration status throughout their program must align with their Plan of Study. If necessary, students should revise their Plan of Study prior to graduation such that it reflects their historical enrollment status. Students who do not update their Plan of Study will not pass the final Graduation Audit conducted by the Graduate College and will not be allowed to graduate. Additionally, students may be deemed ineligible for tuition benefits should their Plans not reflect their actual enrollment.
* Students must consult the [academic calendar](http://www.fau.edu/registrar/registration/calendar.php) and the [Graduate College Graduation Deadlines](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php)for the dates of the following graduation-related deadlines:

1. Application for Degree
2. Revision to Plan of Study (if needed)

**V. Annual ES Retreat**:

* All ES students must attend the Annual ES Retreat each year, usually held on the Boca Campus during the spring semester.
* Thesis students must present a poster of their thesis proposal or project at the Annual ES Retreat each year.
* Non-thesis students must present a poster of their DIR project at the Annual ES Retreat during their second year.

**VI. Email Communication**

Students must use their FAU email address for all communication with the ES Program. Email should be addressed to the ES Program ([envirosci@fau.edu](mailto:envirosci@fau.edu)) or to an appropriate ES administrator or staff (see <http://science.fau.edu/envirosci/es_admin.php>) as specified in the preceding sections.

**VI. DEADLINES**: Students themselves are responsible for meeting all deadlines outlined in the section above.

**APPENDIX A. THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

# A. Organization of Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal should have the following sections in the order listed below, unless an alternative format is decided unanimously by the thesis committee:

1. Face Page
2. Title
3. Abstract
4. Specific Aims
5. Background and Significance Preliminary Data
6. Experimental Design & Methods

Each Research Aim should have a section describing:

* 1. Rationale
  2. Experimental Design
  3. Anticipated Results, Pitfalls and Alternatives

1. References
2. Figures & Figure Legends (at the end of the proposal or inserted into the text).

# B. Format specifications

## Font

* Use an *Arial 11pt,* or  *Times New Roman 12 points* (symbol font for Greek letters etc).

## Page Margins

* Use *standard size (8 ½" x 11")* sheets of paper.
* Use 1 inch margins (top, bottom, left) and 1.5 inch margin on the right for all pages.

## Page format

* Single-sided pages, one column.
* 1.5 line spacing.
* Consecutively numbered pages throughout the document. Do not use suffixes (e.g., 5a, 5b).
* Do not include unnumbered pages.

## Proposal length

* No more than fifteen pages single-spaced text total (not including figures, legends or references) but it should be submitted in a 1.5-line spaced format.

## Figures, Graphs, Diagrams, Charts, Tables, Figure Legends, and Footnotes

* You may use a smaller type size (10 or 11 pt) but it must be in black ink, readily legible, and follow the font typeface requirement.

## Reference style

Please refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) for all citation and reference instructions. Cite in the text alphabetically by author and date, for example: (Hay, 1985; Shimamura & Jurica, 1994). Reference examples are as follows:

Journal:

Shimamura, A.P., & Jurica, P.J. (1994). Memory interference effects and aging. Findings from a test of frontal lobe function. Neuropsychology, 8, 408-412.

Book:

Hay, D. A. (1985). Essentials of Behavior Genetics. Melbourne: Blackwell Scientific.

Book Chapter:

Connolly, J.B., & Tully, T. (1998). Behavior, learning and memory. In D.B. Roberts (Ed.), Drosophila: A Practical Approach (pp. 265-391). New York: Oxford University Press

**APPENDIX B. DIRECTED INDEPENDENT RESEARCH/STUDY GUIDELINES**

# A. Organization of DIR/DIS Report

The exact format of the DIS Report should be decided in consultation with the DIS faculty supervisor. In general, a DIS report should have the following sections in the order listed:

1. Face Page
2. Title
3. Abstract
4. Study Objective(s)
5. Background and Significance
6. Approach

Each Study Objective should have a section describing:

* 1. Methods
  2. Experimental Design and Analysis

1. Results
2. Discussion and Conclusions
3. Figures & Figure Legends (at the end of the proposal or inserted into the text).

# B. Format specifications

## Font

* Use an *Arial 11pt,* or  *Times New Roman 12 points* (symbol font for Greek letters etc).

## Page Margins

* Use *standard size (8 ½" x 11")* sheets of paper.
* Use 1 inch margins (top, bottom, left) and 1.5 inch margin on the right for all pages.

## Page format

* Single-sided pages, one column.
* 1.5 line spacing.
* Consecutively numbered pages throughout the document. Do not use suffixes (e.g., 5a, 5b).
* Do not include unnumbered pages.

## Proposal length

* No more than fifteen pages single-spaced text total (not including figures, legends or references) but it should be submitted in a 1.5-line spaced format.

## Figures, Graphs, Diagrams, Charts, Tables, Figure Legends, and Footnotes

* You may use a smaller type size (10 or 11 pt) but it must be in black ink, readily legible, and follow the font typeface requirement.

## Reference style

Please refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) for all citation and reference instructions. Cite in the text alphabetically by author and date, for example: (Hay, 1985; Shimamura & Jurica, 1994). Reference examples are as follows:

Journal:

Shimamura, A.P., & Jurica, P.J. (1994). Memory interference effects and aging. Findings from a test of frontal lobe function. Neuropsychology, 8, 408-412.

Book:

Hay, D. A. (1985). Essentials of Behavior Genetics. Melbourne: Blackwell Scientific.

Book Chapter:

Connolly, J.B., & Tully, T. (1998). Behavior, learning and memory. In D.B. Roberts (Ed.), Drosophila: A Practical Approach (pp. 265-391). New York: Oxford University Press