Sustainable Energy, PhD

The PhD program in sustainable energy trains students to see beyond the boundaries of traditional methodology to develop transdisciplinary solutions that will guide society toward a sustainable energy future. Students learn from leading sustainability scientists and scholars in this flexible, interdisciplinary program that integrates social and environmental leadership.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Sustainable Energy

American society struggles under the weight of its dependence on fossil fuels. As the global energy system is a complex, socio-technical system in which the technical and societal elements of producing and consuming energy have co-evolved into humanity's largest enterprise, educating the next generation of leaders in guiding society toward a sustainable energy future requires that future energy leaders can seamlessly navigate this very transdisciplinary landscape.

The PhD program in sustainable energy is designed to train students who can see beyond the boundaries of traditional methodologies and disciplinary viewpoints and who can integrate scientific excellence with societal and policy insights. The curriculum engages students to look at sustainable energy both from a transdisciplinary perspective and at different scales, from the lab to commercial application.

At a Glance

- **College/School:** School of Sustainability
- **Location:** Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation
Required Core (18 credit hours)
SOS 571 Sustainable Energy I: Technologies and Systems (3)
SOS 572 Sustainable Energy II: Transitions (3)
SOS 573 Sustainable Energy III: Futures Analysis, Negotiation and Governance (3)
SOS 574 Sustainable Energy Analytics in Context (3)
SOS 575 Sustainable Energy Research Seminar (4)
SOS 589 Community of Graduate Student Scholars (2)

Electives or Research (12 credit hours)

Other Requirement (12 credit hours)
SOS 792 Research (12)

Culminating Experience (12 credit hours)
SOS 799 Dissertation (12)

Additional Curriculum Information
Students take SOS 575 in four different semester terms for 1 credit hour each term.

Electives can be chosen from applicable courses in the following areas based on the student's area of interest and approval from the committee: engineering of matter, transport and energy; sustainable engineering and the built environment; geographical sciences and urban planning; molecular sciences; life sciences; future of innovation in society; physics; and sustainability.

Other electives may be used with approval from the academic unit. Student electives are customizable based on the student's area of research.

Doctoral students will be expected to include higher level courses (600 and 700 levels) as part of the elective and research coursework.

When approved by the student's supervisory committee and the Graduate College, this program allows 30 credit hours from a previously awarded master's degree to be used for this degree. If students do not have a previously awarded master's degree, the 30 hours of coursework will be made up of electives and research.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the School of Sustainability.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree, in any field, from a regionally accredited institution.
Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.25 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of a student's first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. resume or curriculum vitae
4. GRE scores
5. statement of intent
6. three letters of recommendation
7. proof of English proficiency

**Additional Application Information**

An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency.

The school encourages applicants with diverse educational backgrounds and experiences. Sample related fields include engineering, geography, urban planning, environmental science, physics, chemistry or planning for future innovations and societal changes.

All applicants must upload a statement of intent as part of the application process. In no more than 600 words, applicants must explain the goals they intend to achieve through their program of study at the School of Sustainability. Applicants should describe how their background will contribute to their success in the program and how completion of their degree will support their long-term career goals. Finally, applicants should elaborate on key research questions they wish to address or problems they wish to solve as part of their program of study and identify potential faculty advisors.

**Contact Information**

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Admission Deadlines