A master's program for students that want to generate new knowledge and design new ways to address sustainability challenges. This research-oriented degree prepares students for designing and conducting transdisciplinary sustainability research that culminates in the creation of a thesis or scientific paper.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: MA Sustainability

The MA in sustainability is a research-oriented degree that culminates with research writing (either a thesis or capstone in the form of a publishable scientific paper).

The program focuses on knowledge generation and designing new ways to address sustainability challenges and prepares students for designing and conducting transdisciplinary research. Although the graduate degree programs emphasize the integration of a broad range of expertise in student training, this master's degree program is best suited to students inclined toward social sciences, humanities, planning or related fields and who are interested in a career in research or academia.

Students learn how different disciplines view and approach the challenges of sustainability in theory, research and practice, and they develop the academic and technical skills as well as the ethical insights that will help them understand, research and provide solutions to complex sustainability challenges at the local, regional, national and global levels. Students can also apply to participate in the Global Development Research Program, which works in conjunction with this program: https://sustainability.asu.edu/global-development-research/.

All sustainability graduate students will possess:

- an understanding of the need for a transdisciplinary approach to solving sustainability challenges
- the ability to communicate their work to professionals in other disciplines and to policymakers and the general public
- the breadth of vision to recognize the interconnectedness of social, economic, environmental and technical systems
- the critical-thinking skills necessary for approaching sustainability challenges from a systems perspective
- the skills needed to work effectively in interdisciplinary teams
• the technical skills required to formulate and solve problems at the appropriate scale

At a Glance

• College/School: School of Sustainability
• Location: Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

37 credit hours and a thesis, or
37 credit hours including a capstone course (SOS 596)

Required Core (16 credit hours)
SOS 510 Perspectives on Sustainability (3)
SOS 520 Research Design and Methods for Sustainability (3)
SOS 525 Social-Ecological-Technical Systems: Domains and Interfaces (3)
SOS 581 Synthesis for Sustainability Research (3)
SOS 589 Community of Graduate Student Scholars (1)

Electives (15 credit hours)
methods (3)
normative dimensions of sustainability (3)
genral electives (9)

Culminating Experience (6 credit hours)
SOS 596 Capstone: Scientific Paper (6) or
SOS 599 Thesis (6)

Additional Curriculum Information
The taught-course element of the program will be evaluated through course-specific examinations, research papers or applied projects and will be considered to have been successfully completed if the student obtains a GPA of 3.25 or higher. Graduate College policies and procedures for fulfillment of degree requirements must also be met.

SOS 589 is a one credit course taken over four semesters, for four credit hours total.

Approved general electives prefixes include, but are not limited to, the following:
SOS, ASB, ART, PAF, SGS, POS, SOC, PSB, PGS, PHI, COM, CPP, CRD, ESS, PGV, NTR, MCO, GCU, SCM, HPS, HST, JHR, JMC, JUS, LAW, LES, PUP, SBS, RTM, STS, TDM, URB
Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements for 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 3.25 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. statement of intent
4. GRE scores
5. three letters of recommendation
6. resume or curriculum vitae
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 statement of intent should not exceed 600 words and should:

1. Describe how the applicant's background will contribute to success in the program.
2. Describe how completion of the degree will support long-term career goals.
3. Elaborate on key research questions the applicant wishes to address or problems to solve as part of the plan of study.
4. Identify potential faculty advisors.

Letters of recommendation must be from three people who can attest to the applicant's academic and professional achievements. At least one letter should be academic in nature.

Contact Information