Sustainability, PhD

If you want to conduct research and develop solutions to sustainability challenges, you will benefit learning from the leading sustainability scientists and scholars in this flexible, interdisciplinary program that integrates social and environmental leadership.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Sustainability

The PhD program in sustainability prepares students to become scientists and leaders in research and to investigate the urgent sustainability challenges of this century. The flexible, transdisciplinary nature of the program allows students to focus on problems of interest to them, drawing upon relevant knowledge from a variety of disciplines.

In addition to the common learning outcomes, students are able to conduct research on particular sustainability challenges using standard skills, including the capacity to identify problems; formulate and test hypotheses; use statistical, econometric and geographical information-system techniques to construct and analyze datasets; and build and apply models. They are able to lead others in the analysis and design of the built environment and institutions' policies, regulations and technologies to support sustainable development, and they are able to lead others in applying these concepts and methods to the development of sustainable strategies for water, land, air and urban management at the local and global levels. Students are able to understand the concepts and methods of a number of critical disciplines bearing on the sustainability of systems at different spatial and temporal scales.

Graduates possess an advanced understanding of the dynamics of coupled socioecological systems and are able to lead others in research providing adaptive solutions to specific sustainability challenges. All sustainability graduate students 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, and the breadth of vision to recognize the interconnectedness of social, economic, environmental and technical systems. They apply critical-thinking skills to approach
sustainability challenges from a systems perspective, the skills needed to work effectively in transdisciplinary teams, and the technical skills to formulate and solve problems at the appropriate scale.

Interested students may learn more about careers in sustainability and where graduates of the doctorate in sustainability are now employed by visiting


At a Glance

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

Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

**Required Core (6 credit hours)**
- SOS 510 Perspectives on Sustainability (3)
- SOS 520 Research Design and Methods for Sustainability (3)

**Foundational Electives (15 credit hours)**

**Solutions Workshop Electives (6 credit hours)**

**Open Electives (33 credit hours)**

**Research (12 credit hours)**
- SOS 792 Research (12)

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

**Additional Curriculum Information**
For electives, students should see the academic unit for the approved course list. Other coursework may be used with the approval of the academic unit. Only six credit hours of 400-level coursework can be included in the plan of study.
When approved by the student's supervisory committee and the Graduate College, this program allows up to 30 credit hours from a previously awarded master's degree to be used for this program. If students do not have a previously awarded master's degree, the remaining coursework is to be made up of appropriate electives.

**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. The school encourages applicants with diverse educational backgrounds and experiences that are relevant to the school's core objectives.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 (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 describe how the applicant's background will contribute to success in the program; describe how completion of the degree will support long-term career goals; elaborate on key research questions the applicant wishes to address or problems to solve as part of the plan of study; and, 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.
Application Deadlines

Fall

Global Opportunities

Global Experience

Students may also participate in a study abroad program (https://schoolofsustainability.asu.edu/student-life/study-abroad) or apply to participate in the Global Development Research Program (https://sustainability.asu.edu/global-development-research), which works in conjunction with this program. Many students in the doctoral program in sustainability also conduct research abroad as part of their culminating experience.

Contact Information

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Admission Deadlines