

School of Environment and Sustainability

Doctor of Philosophy in Environment and Sustainability (PhD)

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Environment and Sustainability program trains interdisciplinary scholars for leadership roles in advancing the understanding and practice of environmental issues and sustainability. Doctoral students participate in critical appraisal, research analysis and synthesis, and knowledge generation and translation.

Students in the doctoral program will be encouraged by faculty to explore the full meaning of interdisciplinary research and to develop an in-depth knowledge of a substantive area related to environment and sustainability. The program offers doctoral students the opportunity to participate in and lead original research solutions.



Students enrolled in this program are required to complete six credit units of graduate course work and a dissertation based on original research, and to participate in ENVS 990: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability. Doctoral students must complete a qualifying exam within eight months of their first registration. Satisfactory completion of a comprehensive exam with written and oral components is required before the end of the second year of study.

This program can be completed within three years of full-time study. However, students can take up to six years to complete the program, excluding any periods of approved leave.

PhD Program Curriculum

Required Courses

Courses can generally be selected from anywhere on campus, including the school's list of core courses and restricted electives, with consultation and approval from the student's advisory committee. For a complete listing of courses available at the University of Saskatchewan, please visit www.usask.ca/calendar/coursecat/.

Students who have not previously completed an interdisciplinary graduate degree are encouraged to take one of the following two courses. Students are encouraged to enroll in the course containing subject matter that is less familiar to the student.

ENVS 801.3 – Ecosystem Science and Sustainability

An introduction to how principles and concepts of ecology and ecosystems science are applied to advance environmental sustainability. Students will gain a solid understanding of how natural systems function, and how scientists apply their understanding and uncertainties about ecosystems to address environmental management problems and advance environmental sustainability.

ENVS 802.3 – Human Dimensions of Environmental Change

This course explores the past and present interactions between people and the natural world. It addresses ways that environment has molded human societies and ways that people have altered nature. Contemporary concerns for environmental sustainability are introduced by examining human entanglement with a range of natural and modified systems.



Required Courses (Continued)

All formal coursework should ideally be completed in the student's first year of full-time study. Students can meet the requirements for ENV5 990: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability by attending and participating in the seminar and by presenting the results of their dissertation research. Completion of the research requirement is met when the dissertation is successfully defended and approved.

Career Paths

The School of Environment and Sustainability's PhD program prepares graduate students for exciting research and leadership roles with government agencies, universities, consulting firms and other organizations.



Application Deadline

Students should ideally apply for the doctoral program by February 15 for a May or September start. Applications will be accepted anytime, but early application is encouraged. Applications submitted after February 15 of each year have limited access to scholarship funding.

All applicants are required to have a master's degree, or equivalent, from a recognized university, in an area related to environment and sustainability, with a minimum scholastic standing of 70%. To be eligible for scholarship funding, an applicant is required to have an 80% average in their previous graduate program. Candidates must meet the admission requirements of the College of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Saskatchewan, as detailed on its website www.usask.ca/cgsr.

More Information

For more information regarding our programs, courses, pre-requisites, tuition and scholarships, please call (306) 966-1985 or visit www.usask.ca/sens.



"My area of research is education for sustainable development, specifically focusing on the role of Indigenous ecological knowledge in considering postcolonial forms of education concerned with environmental sustainability. The interdisciplinary nature of the school's program gives me a range of options to develop my major and minor concentration areas. I am confident I will come out of the program with an in-depth understanding of environmental sustainability concepts. I will be ready to lead sustainability initiatives in general, and education for sustainable development in particular."

Jean Kayira
PhD student