

MES STUDENT POLICY HANDBOOK

2001 - 2002

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

September, 2001

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PROGRAM CONTACTS

| Contact | Office | Phone Extension & email |
|--|--------------------------|--|
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The Evergreen State College

Graduate Program in Environmental Studies

WELCOME

Congratulations on your enrollment in Evergreen's Graduate Program in Environmental Studies, generally referred to as the "MES Program." The rest of the MES faculty, the staff, and I look forward to working with you and helping you realize your academic and professional objectives. We hope that you will find the program and its classes exciting and challenging.

The MES faculty and staff are committed to assisting you to a successful completion of the MES degree program. We encourage you to consult with us when you have questions about how best to proceed either academically or personally. This Policy Handbook has been prepared as a guide to the policies and operational details of the program and as a complement to the Graduate Catalog. Please keep it with your basic reference documents, as it will serve as the initial source for answers to your questions on these topics.

Please note that we continually work to improve the curricular offerings as well as the procedures and policies, and a few of the details in this Handbook are still being discussed by the faculty, academic staff and administration. We will distribute copies of significant changes as they occur, and we will also let you know of things you need to do at appropriate times through class announcements and e-mail.

Again, welcome to the MES program! You have joined with your colleagues in this class and those admitted in other years in a unique adventure in education that has produced some outstanding graduates and has been recognized nationally and internationally as one of the best environmental studies graduate programs in the country.

John Perkins
Director, Graduate Program in Environmental Studies

September, 2001

PROVISIONS AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Admission to the Graduate Program in Environmental Studies (MES) is based upon demonstration of a sound academic and/or professional history, coupled with community involvement, and the Admission Committee's belief in the candidate's potential for academic success.

Sometimes, candidates are admitted **provisionally** or **conditionally** if they have not met all of the admission requirements. Students are accountable for satisfying those requirements, as specified in their letter of admission and within the specified time limits.

Provisional Admission

Students who are admitted provisionally with the requirement that they complete an undergraduate degree prior to entering their first core program must order an official transcript from the degree-granting institution immediately upon completion of the degree. Official transcripts, which are due no later than November 1 (September 15 for financial aid funds to be released for Fall Quarter), should be submitted to the Admissions Office. In addition, at a minimum the Admissions Office must receive written confirmation of the degree from an official at the awarding institution by September 15 before the student may enroll for Fall Quarter.

Conditional Admission

Students admitted conditionally are notified of the terms of their admission in their admission letter. The conditions generally require completion of studies related to the admission prerequisites (microeconomics, statistics, biology). Documentation that the conditions have been satisfied, such as official transcripts of courses taken, should be sent to the Admissions Office as soon as possible after the completion of the work and no later than November 1.

One final point about admission: All Students admitted must advance to candidacy by the end of the second quarter's work, if they are to continue toward the degree. See page 3 for more information on candidacy.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

MES students are required to complete successfully a total of 72 quarter hours of credit, including 32 core credits. Students electing to fulfill the thesis requirement through the Thesis: Essay of Distinction option will need to complete 8 thesis credits and 32 elective credits. Students who choose to complete the more intensive Thesis option must complete 16 thesis credits and 24 elective credits. Each core course carries 8 units of credit; electives normally carry 4 units. Students have four calendar years (16 quarters, including summers), starting with their first fall quarter, in which to complete all degree requirements. This may be extended in unusual circumstances upon written petition to the MES Director.

REGISTRATION

For web registration, students will receive an ID number and a pin number from the Registration and Records Office. Students use these to register via the web using the Gateway On-Line services located on TESC website: www.evergreen.edu. Registration can occur at any time before the 5th day of class. Students are encouraged to register as early as possible. Graduate students may register for up to 12 credits per quarter. Students who are employed full time or for more than 20 hours per week may register for only 8 credits.

Graduate students who take undergraduate courses for undergraduate credit will be charged undergraduate tuition rates for those credits; these credits will not satisfy the MES elective requirements, and graduate tuition waiver awards cannot be used to pay for them. However, exceptional circumstances might occur in which a graduate student enrolled in an advanced undergraduate course would complete, with faculty approval, substantial work beyond that required for undergraduate credit and receive graduate credit. Special arrangements must be made with the MES director before enrolling in any undergraduate course.

Specific information on registration is available from the Office of Registration and Records, 867-6180, and from the Graduate Program Support Office, 867-6707.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic Advisor

At present, there is no formal assignment of academic advisors, but normally a student's core seminar leader will serve as the first source of advice. Students may find that a particular faculty member is a good match for their needs and interests and ask that person to serve as their advisor. Full-time faculty who are teaching in the MES program in any given year are available to serve as the primary advisors, but faculty who cycle into the undergraduate curriculum often continue to work with MES students with whom they have developed an advising relationship. The MES Director is also available for general academic advice.

Educational Plan

Each student is strongly encouraged during her/his first Fall quarter to develop an educational plan that addresses the following topics:

- (1) The student's academic, professional and personal development goals, considering both specialization and breadth.
- (2) How program offerings will aid the student in meeting her/his goals.
- (3) Selection of electives available during the academic year that incorporate the student's goals.
- (4) Assessment of the student's level of preparation in academic disciplines necessary for successful participation in MES core programs and electives relevant to the student's goals.
- (5) A plan to enhance areas of deficiency identified in the assessment. The plan will include suggested independent readings, undergraduate course work, individual learning contracts, and electives.

This plan should be reviewed regularly, particularly during the student's third quarter, following achievement of candidacy.

Students who are unsure of their goals or who would like to pursue in-depth exploration of their career goals and how MES can help meet them should contact the Coordinator for Student Services for more extensive assistance.

CREDIT POLICY, ACADEMIC STANDING, AND INCOMPLETES

All graduate students are expected to perform at a high academic level. Incompletes will be granted only in cases of extenuating circumstances and must be removed by the end of the academic quarter following the quarter for which the Incomplete is awarded. Incompletes not removed by the deadline will be reported as no credit. Partial credit will not be awarded.

Completion of all four core programs is a requirement of the graduate program. Much of the learning in the programs occurs through the interactions with the faculty team and with classmates. This interaction would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in separate courses or an individual learning contract. Therefore, the students must complete each core program as a unit, and under normal circumstances, no portion of the core requirement can be waived, even if there appears to be some redundancy with the student's previous work.

In the event that a student does not satisfactorily complete all the requirements in a core program, the student may be given an Incomplete, with the understanding that the unfinished work must be submitted within one quarter of the term in which the Incomplete was given. If a substantial portion of the class requirements has not been met, however, the faculty team may choose to assign No Credit at the conclusion of the class. In the case that No Credit is reported, the student will be required to reregister for and complete the entire core class.

Students who fail to earn credit for all their academic work in two successive quarters will be placed on academic probation and must earn credit in all academic work for the next quarter in which they are enrolled in order to be in good standing. In the event that a student does not meet this requirement, he or she may be asked to leave the program or required to take a year's leave of absence. Additionally, if a student fails to receive credit for any two quarters of core course work, including the repetition of any core course, the student will be asked to leave the program.

The final decision on the assignment of an Incomplete or No Credit rests with the faculty teaching the class.

CANDIDACY REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY

In order to earn the MES degree, a student must first be approved as a degree candidate. Candidacy is automatically reviewed upon completion of the first two quarters of core courses. Advancement to MES candidacy is based in part upon demonstration by the student that she or he can design and execute a scholarly research paper and effectively communicate the research results in an oral presentation. In order to provide the candidacy committee with positive evidence, each student will be required to execute such a project as part of the course work in the first-year winter-quarter core program. The written research paper should be analytical (not simply descriptive), well organized, present a thesis and supporting evidence for it, and demonstrate appropriate use of bibliographic resources. Both the written and oral presentations must be in an appropriate scholarly form. The student's overall strength of academic performance to date will also be considered in the decision to grant candidacy.

The candidacy committee, made up of the faculty teaching in the first-year core sequence in that year, will review each student's entire record to that point and recommend to the director which students should be advanced to candidacy. The director will notify each student in writing of the decision. Students denied candidacy will not be permitted to continue in the MES Program.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Students with learning challenges or disabilities who need reasonable accommodations to complete their academic work must contact the MES Program Director within the first three weeks of enrollment in the MES Program. Students with documented disabilities may arrange additional support through Evergreen's Access Services in Library 1407D, ext. 6348.

INTERNSHIPS

An internship is a learning experience designed to aid students in achieving specific academic and professional objectives. You are strongly encouraged to include an internship in your educational plan, especially if you do not have prior professional-level experience in environmental work.

Two internship options are available to MES students:

1. **A credit-generating internship** is one in which the student, faculty sponsor, and agency supervisor formally agree upon a student's academic objectives for the quarter and a plan for achieving those objectives in an agency setting. It must include new academic learning and not be developed only to obtain work experience or entry-level employment. Occasionally, a student may be allowed to undertake a credit-generating internship with the agency with whom she/he is employed. Evergreen has strict policies for these internships: a student who wishes to do an employment-related internship must work with the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services early in the planning process to ensure that the credit being sought is for a project that is not a part of his/her regular work.
2. In addition, many organizations advertise entry-level, compensated internships throughout the year and inform the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services about them. These do not include a formal academic component or earn academic credit. While it is important to discuss such internship opportunities with your advisor, taking an internship that does not include academic credit is ultimately an individual arrangement between the student and the internship agency or organization and does not require the formal procedures or forms described below.

It is important that students have an opportunity to become oriented to the MES program before undertaking an internship. Therefore, in most circumstances a student must complete three quarters in the MES program before developing a credit-generating internship. The Director must approve exceptions to this policy.

Internships are generally with government agencies, but may be with nonprofit or private sector organizations. If you are considering an internship, you should initiate discussions with your academic advisor and the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services. In doing so, you will assess the type of internship in which you are interested (credit generating or non-credit generating, paid or voluntary, type of agency or organization involved), the extent to which you will benefit from an internship, and how it fits into your overall academic plan.

Locating an Internship

After you have determined that an internship is appropriate to your academic plan and if you do not yet have a specific internship in mind, check with the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services for leads and ideas. You should contact the Coordinator two to three months before an internship is needed if you need assistance in developing internship leads. Leads are also posted regularly via e-mail and on the internship board outside LAB 1, room 3020.

The Washington State Legislature sponsors several graduate interns each summer. These interesting and well-paid internships are publicized and filled the previous fall because legislative staff are unavailable during the legislature, which meets during the winter and spring. An on-campus information session will be held in the Fall, and more information is available from the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services.

Internship Learning Contract and Registration

A credit-generating internship is planned, arranged and conducted to meet the needs of the host organization and the academic and professional objectives of the student. These objectives, needs and all other internship-related matters are agreed upon before the internship begins, and are formalized in the Graduate Internship Learning Contract. All Graduate Internship Learning Contracts require a faculty sponsor, who will guide and review the academic components of the internship.

All credit-generating internships require a Graduate Internship Learning Contract. This contract form is available in the Computer Center or from the Graduate Program Support Office under WORD: file: graduate forms. The final contract is filled out only after a draft contract has been completed and approved by the faculty sponsor, field supervisor, and then the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services. Draft contract forms and an Internship Checklist, which guides you through the process, are available from the Coordinator. Once the final draft contract is approved, the Graduate Internship Learning Contract should be completed in final form. The contract is a formal document signed by all parties: student, faculty sponsor, and field supervisor as well as the MES Director and Coordinator for Public and Professional Services before the student registers. The original signed contract becomes part of the student's official transcript.

At the completion of a credit-generating internship, it is the responsibility of the student to write a narrative self-evaluation of the internship. It is also the field supervisor's responsibility to write an evaluation that assesses the intern's job performance. The field supervisor and student intern should meet to discuss the evaluation at the end of the internship. The student's and field supervisor's evaluations are then sent to the faculty sponsor, who will meet with the student for an internship evaluation conference. The faculty sponsor is responsible for drafting the final internship evaluation, which will include all or significant portions of the field supervisor's evaluation. Both the student's self-evaluation and the faculty evaluation become part of the student's official transcript.

While the host agency is encouraged to provide a stipend or salary to the intern, volunteer internships of equivalent learning and professional value are often more readily available. The intern will need to make a decision regarding compensation based on her/his learning objectives and financial position. The availability of compensation should in no way impinge on the academic validity and quality of the internship experience.

Internship placements will usually be within the Puget Sound region. Although internships may be arranged outside of the region, they require special approval and arrangements. An internship outside the region must be approved by your faculty sponsor and the MES Director.

Academic Credit for Internships

In general, two credits per quarter will be awarded for successful completion of a part-time internship (ten hours per week). Four credits will be awarded for completion of an internship of twenty hours per week or more. A second internship will be approved only if it is significantly different from the first, and a student will be approved to register for more than a total of four-quarter hours of internship in any given quarter only under exceptional circumstances. Normally no more than eight quarter hours of elective credit can be accumulated through Internship and/or Individual Learning Contracts. The MES director should be consulted before considering any internships or individual learning contracts beyond the first such experience.

Internships and Theses

It is possible to generate a thesis from an internship experience. While the thesis project may go beyond the tasks assigned to the intern, the internship may provide the information or the contacts useful in developing a project. If you envision using an internship for this purpose, you should discuss the possibility with your academic advisor and your faculty sponsor.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING CONTRACTS

When a student's academic program design cannot be satisfactorily completed through the available elective courses and internships, the student may arrange an Individual Learning Contract with a faculty member. This is a negotiated, signed agreement between the student and faculty for the student to pursue independent, individualized study. In most cases, due to limitations of faculty time, the burden of the academic design and undertaking is on the student, and the faculty acts more as a guide and mentor than as a "teacher," per se. Students who believe they will need and benefit from an Individual Learning Contract should consult their advisor and the MES Program Director for advice on the appropriateness of such an undertaking and for suggested faculty sponsors.

Basic policies and procedures for Individual Learning Contracts are similar to those for Internship Learning Contracts, except that they do not involve an external field supervisor or review by the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services. The Graduate Individual Learning Contract form is available at the Computer Center and the Graduate Program Support Office under WORD; file: graduate forms. The final contract document is signed by the student and faculty sponsor and must be approved by the MES Program Director before the student registers. Normally, no more than eight quarter hours of elective credit can be accumulated through Internship and/or Individual Learning Contracts. The MES director should be consulted before considering any contracts beyond this limit.

MASTERS THESIS

The MES Program offers two ways to fulfill the thesis requirement. Both require that the student engage in research of a topic of real-world interest and develop its political, economic and scientific aspects. They can be individual or team efforts; group projects are strongly encouraged. The project preferably should be of value to an external client or organization and not just an academic exercise. The primary differences between the two thesis options lie in the scope of the problem examined and the manner in which the research is conducted. Students should consult with their advisor and/or the MES Program Director about their thesis option as they approach completion of sufficient credits for beginning thesis work, normally in the Fall of their second or third year for full-time and part-time students, respectively.

(e) Decision making processes must provide equal opportunity to initiate and participate in policy making, and Evergreen policies apply equally regardless of job description, status or role in the community. However, College policies and rules shall not conflict with state law or statutory, regulatory and/or contractual commitments to college employees.

(10) Political Activities: The college is obligated not to take a position, as an institution, in electoral politics or on public policy issues except for those matters which directly affect its integrity, the freedom of the members of its community, its financial support, and its educational programs. At the same time, Evergreen has the obligation to recognize and support its community members' rights to engage, as citizens of the larger society, in political affairs, in any way that they may elect within the provision of the general law.

CIVIL RIGHTS POLICIES

The Evergreen State College expressly prohibits sexual harassment as well as discrimination against any person on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual preference, or the presence of any sensory, physical or mental handicap. Copies of these policies are available from the President's Assistant for Civil Rights, Library 3104, ext. 6386.

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW POLICY **Excerpts from WAC 174-126**

General Policy

This policy regarding the use of human subjects recognizes the responsibility to protect the rights, well-being and personal privacy of individuals, to assure a favorable climate for the conduct of academic-oriented inquiry and to protect the interests of The Evergreen State College. The following practices and procedures have been established for the conduct of activities involving human subjects.

Practices and Procedures

1. No activity involving human subjects shall be undertaken unless a Human Subjects Review Board has reviewed and approved such activity. This review shall determine whether these subjects will be placed at risk and, if so, whether:
 - a. the risks to the subject are so outweighed by the sum of the benefit to the subject and the importance of the knowledge to be gained as to warrant a decision to allow the subject to accept these risks;
 - b. the rights and welfare of any such subjects will be adequately protected; and
 - c. legally effective informed consent will be obtained by adequate and appropriate methods.
2. Activities subject to review:
 - a. all activities supported by non-college funds in which such action is required by the grantor;
 - b. other activities which involve the likelihood of risk or substantial stress or discomfort to the subject;
 - c. activities which include the administration of personality tests, inventories or questionnaires of a personal and sensitive nature;

- d. activities involving health care procedures of any kind which are not principally for the benefit of the subject, or which include diagnostic or therapeutic measures that are not yet standard; and
- e. other activities in which the subject is not fully informed as to the procedure to be followed.

Copies of the entire policy and Human Subjects Review Forms are available in the Academic Deans' Office, LIB 2217.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

PURPOSE: Students at The Evergreen State College enjoy the basic rights of all members of society. At the same time, students have an obligation to fulfill the responsibilities incumbent upon all citizens as well as the responsibilities of their particular roles within the academic community. Students may be accountable to civil a, criminal authorities and to the college for acts occurring on or off campus which constitute violations of law. Students may be accountable to civil and criminal authorities and to the college for acts occurring on college premises and at college sponsored events. (WAC 174-120-015)

WHO CAN FILE A GRIEVANCE: Currently enrolled students, faculty and staff may initiate the student conduct code grievance process. If the person wishing to file a grievance against a student is not an enrolled student, staff or faculty but is here at the invitation of the college, they may contact the campus grievance officer, who will decide whether or not to take on the case on behalf of the college.

Copies of the Student Conduct Code are available in the Vice President for Student Affairs Office, L3236, and from the Assistant to the MES/MPA Directors. Sue Feldman, SE 3127, ext. 5013, serves as the campus Grievance Officer.

