

ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY (MS)

Brooks School of Public Policy

CIP: 03.0203 | HEGIS: 2199 | NYSED: 44825

Program Description

There is increasing awareness of the profound environmental challenges in the United States (U.S.) and globally, including climate change from consumption of fossil fuels, biodiversity loss, pollution, deforestation, sea level rise, and food and water insecurity, among others. This drives growing demand for professional training to prepare for careers that contribute to finding solutions to this complex global environmental crisis. Most environmental studies MS degrees orient toward solutions in physical science, engineering, or business. In contrast, the Brooks School Master of Science in Environmental and Sustainability Policy (MSESP) degree focuses on rigorous applied training in social sciences, public policy and regulatory approaches to advance solutions to environmental threats. Coursework includes in-depth study of the legal, regulatory, and ethical aspects of the environmental policy process, environmental justice, environmental economics, political analysis, statistics, data analytics, and policy communication for a sustainable world. The program consists core requirements and elective courses to deepen policy and scientific expertise in a specialized aspects of sustainability solutions such as climate and energy, conservation, food systems, and biodiversity.

Admissions Requirements

Each application is reviewed holistically and in the context of the overall applicant pool for that admission cycle. To be considered for admission, applicants must submit a complete application package as outlined below.

- Transcripts from all colleges or universities attended
- Two letters of recommendation
- Resume
- Statement of purpose
- Online video interview
- TOEFL or IELTS scores, if applicable

Visit the Graduate School Admissions site (<https://gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/prepare/english-language-proficiency-requirement/>) for details on the English language proficiency requirement, including standing exemptions.

Academic Standards

All courses must be completed for a grade of C or better. If the course is only offered with S/U grading, a grade of SX must be received.

Policies and Procedures

For details about Brooks School academic policies see the Brooks School policies page.

Please review the university catalog policies regarding academic integrity and final exams.

Petitions

Course substitutions may be permitted based on prior mastery of a subject or to request a relevant course not listed within the catalog year's curriculum requirements. These petitions must be approved by the Environmental and Sustainability Policy Program Director.

Environmental and Sustainability Policy students must be in-residence for all semesters of the program. They must also attend classes according to the modality offered by the course and cannot request an alternative form of attendance/participation.

Students who face an extenuating circumstance may petition the Environmental and Sustainability Policy Director for an exception to an Environmental and Sustainability Policy academic policy.

Good Academic Standing Requirements

The minimum academic standards are as follows:

- A student must maintain a semester and cumulative grade point average of 3.0.
- Students must receive a grade of C or better in all degree requirements.
- A student cannot carry more than two (2) incomplete grades simultaneously.
- Students must complete at least 12 credits each semester unless they have received an approved petition to take fewer than 12 credits (e.g. for SDS accommodation)
- Students must be in-residence unless they are participating in an approved off-campus activity, with written approval from the Program Director.
- A student must be making "satisfactory progress" toward a Brooks School master's degree.

Review Process

At the end of each semester, the Brooks School committee on academic status (CAS) reviews each Bachelor of Science and Professional Master student's academic record to ensure that the minimum academic standards are met. The committee takes appropriate action for students whose academic achievement is considered unsatisfactory as defined by the criteria above. To support every student's success, the committee may take any of the following actions:

- Withdraw the student permanently from the Brooks School and Cornell University.
- Require the student to take a leave of absence for one or more semesters.
- Issue a warning to the student at one of the following levels (these imply that if the student does not show considerable improvement during the semester, the committee may withdraw the student):
 - Severe warning with danger of being withdrawn
 - Severe warning
 - Warning
- Add the student's name to a review list; students with this status are monitored by the committee throughout the semester.
- Return the student to good standing.

Any of the above actions may be accompanied by a semester credit limit or a requirement for the student to meet with an academic advisor by a date set by the committee.

Students placed on a required leave must appeal to CAS to return. This appeal occurs at the end of the required leave period. Students who have been withdrawn may appeal the decision before the committee during the pre-semester appeals meeting.

All students with an academic warning status automatically will be reviewed for specific criteria at the end of the subsequent semester. Students put on warning, severe warning, or severe warning with danger of being withdrawn status will be informed of conditions that they are expected to fulfill to return to good standing.

Students who have been previously placed on a required leave and wish to return to the Brooks School must submit a plan of study to the committee before being rejoined. The student should contact the Registrar (BrooksRegistrar@cornell.edu) in the Brooks Office of Admissions, Student Services, and Career Management to discuss the process and due dates.

Students who have been withdrawn from the Brooks School by CAS may request that they be readmitted. Such students have three years from the date they were withdrawn to make this appeal with assistance from an advisor in the Brooks Office of Admissions, Student Services, and Career Management. After three years, a former student must apply for readmission through the Brooks School admissions process. A student applying for readmission should discuss their situation with an advisor in the Brooks Office of Admissions, Student Services and Career Management. The student also should talk with others who may be able to help—faculty mentors, instructors, or a member of the university medical staff. Any information given to the committee is held in the strictest confidence.

Program Information

- Instruction Mode: In Person
- Location: Ithaca, NY
- Minimum Credits for Degree: 40

Program Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		
PUBPOL 5210	Intermediate Microeconomics for Public Affairs	3
PUBPOL 5575	Statistics for Public Policy	3
PUBPOL 5590	Environmental Justice and Policy	3
PUBPOL 5605	Political Analysis and the Policy Process	3
PUBPOL 5610	Data Analytics and Regression Analysis	3
PUBPOL 5665	Managing and Leading Organizations	3
PUBPOL 5730	Comparative Environmental Policy	3
PUBPOL 5820	Policy Communication for a Sustainable World	3
PUBPOL 5865	Legal, Regulatory, and Ethical Aspects of Environmental Policy	3
PUBPOL 5880	Brooks Engaged Learning Capstone	4
PUBPOL 5905	Environmental and Sustainability Policy Colloquium	3
PUBPOL 5970	Economics and Environmental Policy	3
Elective Courses ¹		3
Total Hours		40

¹ Elective coursework must be relevant to the student’s unique environmental and sustainability policy academic goals, and must be approved by the program director.

University Graduation Requirements Requirements for All Students

In order to receive a Cornell degree, a student must satisfy academic and non-academic requirements.

Academic Requirements

A student’s college determines degree requirements such as residency, number of credits, distribution of credits, and grade averages. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the specific major, degree, distribution, college, and graduation requirements for completing their chosen program of study. See the individual requirements listed by each college or school or contact the college registrar’s office (<https://registrar.cornell.edu/service-resources/college-registrar-directory/>) for more information.

Non-academic Requirements

Conduct Matters. Students must satisfy any outstanding sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed or agreed to under the Student Code of Conduct (Code) or Policy 6.4. Where a formal complaint under the Code or Policy 6.4 is pending, the University will withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the adjudication process set forth in those procedures is complete, including the satisfaction of any sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed.

Financial Obligations. Outstanding financial obligations will not impact the awarding of a degree otherwise earned or a student’s ability to access their official transcript. However, the University may withhold issuing a diploma until any outstanding financial obligations owing to the University are satisfied.

Learning Outcomes

- Interpret and explain the theory and use of tools applicable to the development and evaluation of policy.
- Develop the skills required for effective delivery of evidence used for policy formation and evaluation, including written, spoken, and visual presentation.
- Work with others toward the goal of serving the public interest.
- Foster an inclusive learning environment in which diverse approaches and points of view can help guide government actions.
- Evaluate and scrutinize data to inform policy evaluation.