NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

http://nres.illinois.edu

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E-mail: nres-ssc@illinois.edu

Major: Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

Degrees Offered: M.S., Ph.D.

Online Program: Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

Degrees Offered: M.S.

Joint Degree Program: Master of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and Juris Doctor in Law

Degrees Offered: M.S. and J.D.

Graduate Degree Program

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences is a broad and diverse department offering flexible M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. The mission of the department is to establish and implement research and educational programs that enhance environmental stewardship in the management and use of natural, agricultural, and urban systems in a socially responsible manner. The department is composed of approximately 24 faculty, 60 affiliates, and 160 graduate students. Offering education and research in a variety of disciplines, the department provides a systems-level perspective that few other departments can offer. Further illustrating the breadth of natural resources and environmental sciences, research areas include but are not limited to:

- agronomy/agroecology
- aquatic chemistry
- conservation ecology
- ecosystem science
- environmental education
- fish and wildlife ecology and management
- forest ecology
- humans dimensions of the environment
- landscape ecology
- microbial ecology
- natural resource economics
- natural resource policy
- plant ecology
- physiology and genetics
- restoration ecology
- quantitative and spatial analysis
- soil science and conservation
- sustainability

Admission

NRES graduate advisers are seeking students with strong letters of reference, evident motivation to undertake graduate study, relevant experience, and good preparation in prerequisite courses. Graduate applicants must have an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (A = 4.0) calculated on the last 2 years of undergraduate coursework to be admitted with full status. Ph.D. applicants must have earned an M.S. (or expect to be awarded the degree before beginning the NRES program) with a grade point average of at least 3.5. Applicants should have adequate preparation in the fundamental sciences and courses appropriate to their proposed field of study (applicants should talk with prospective advisers about the background they expect). Those without the necessary prerequisites may be accepted conditionally, and the undergraduate courses must be completed before the degree will be awarded. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required of all students applying to the campus M.S. or Ph.D. program. There is no minimum score for admission, and the results will be examined along with GPA, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, research experience, and other information in the application package. However, successful applicants typically have a combined quantitative/verbal/analytical GRE percentile of at least 70%. Students whose native language is not English are required to submit the results of the TOEFL or IELTS as evidence of English proficiency. Official scores are required to be submitted directly from TOEFL/ETS or IELTS to the University. Minimum English test scores and other information for international applicants can be found at: www.grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/begin/international (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/begin/international). Applicants who are not U.S. citizens must also submit evidence that they have sufficient financial support for their program of study. Prospective graduate students are urged to apply for admission to the degree program as early as possible, preferably six to ten months before the beginning of the semester in which they expect to enroll. Prospective students must review important application information available a http://nres.illinois.edu/graduate/prospective. Applicants to the campus programs wishing to be considered for a university-level fellowship must apply for admission to the fall semester by December 15th, and, to be considered for any college or departmental funding, the application deadline is January 1st.

Graduate Teaching Experience

Although teaching is not a Graduate College requirement, experience in teaching is considered an important part of this graduate program, particularly for Ph.D. students.

Faculty Research Interests

Graduate degree programs in NRES are informed by the major areas of faculty research, which include:

- agronomy/agroecology
- conservation ecology
- ecosystem science
- fish and wildlife ecology and management
- forest ecology
- global environmental change
- human dimensions of natural resources and ecology
- landscape ecology
- microbial ecosystems
- natural resource policy
Financial Aid

Several sources of financial aid are available within the department:

- research assistantships, supported by federal and grant funds made available to the natural resources and environmental sciences faculty
- teaching assistantships
- departmental fellowships
- University fellowships
- College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences Jonathan Baldwin Turner Fellowships
- waivers of tuition and fees

Most NRES graduate students with financial support have a research assistantship provided by the adviser. Appointments as research and teaching assistants and fellows provide a stipend and waive tuition and some fees.

Financial aid is granted on a competitive basis. Applicants are judged for academic potential based on past performance, experience, motivation, dedication to the designated area of interest and, where applicable, the potential to satisfy the objectives of a donor. Fellowships have minimum GPA and GRE score requirements. Information about the current availability of financial aid can be obtained from the graduate coordinator or, in the case of research assistantships, directly from the current availability of financial aid can be obtained from the graduate coordinator.

Human Dimensions of Environmental Systems: NRES graduate students may participate in HDES, an interdisciplinary program comprised of faculty from six colleges at Illinois. Participants are united in the study of connections between humans and the environment. The program is built on the premise that the best insights are not limited to the domain of a single discipline and is interdisciplinary in all its pursuits.

Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

The Ph.D. program prepares students to be an expert in their fields. Earning a Ph.D. involves mastering a field of study and increasing the knowledge and understanding in that field through the completion of a dissertation that makes a contribution to existing research. Students working toward the Ph.D. degree are required demonstrate competency in at least three content areas by passing a general examination (the preliminary examination) before admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. Students consult with their advisers to identify their competency content areas and the courses they will take, which are recorded on the Doctoral Plan of Study. The NRES Ph.D. program requires students to register for NRES Seminar (500) each semester, minus two, that the student is enrolled. To earn the doctorate, students must successfully complete a final oral examination (thesis defense). In most cases, students earn a M.S. before starting work on a Ph.D. However, in certain cases, it is possible to take the coursework required for the M.S. as part of a Ph.D. program. Details of the B.S. to Ph.D. program are available from the graduate coordinator.

Other Requirements

- Minimum GPA: 3.0
- Masters Degree Required for Admission to PhD?: Yes
- Qualifying Exam Required: No
- Preliminary Exam Required: Yes
- Final Exam/Dissertation Defense Required: Yes
- Dissertation Deposit Required: Yes

For additional details and requirements refer to the department’s Graduate Handbook (http://nres.illinois.edu/graduate/handbook) and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook).

M.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and J.D. in Law

Prospective students interested in specializing in environmental or natural resource law are invited to explore our joint degree program. This unique program is offered through collaboration between the College of Law and the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. Many law schools have responded to public concern about the environment by offering more courses in natural resources and environmental law. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign goes
one step further, however, allowing students to supplement a law program with training in a related scientific field.

**Thesis Option**

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<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>NRES 594</td>
<td>NRES Professional Orientation</td>
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<td>Environmental Law and Pol I</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAW 618</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
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<td>LAW 622</td>
<td>Land Use Planning</td>
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<td>Research/Project/Independent Study Hours (Optional - min/max applied toward degree):</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRES 599</td>
<td>Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)</td>
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Requirements for the JD in Law

Total Hours: 102

**Other Requirements**

- Other requirements may overlap
- Minimum 500-level Hours Required Overall: 12
- Completion, defense and deposit of thesis.
- Students may count up to 12 hours of NRES course work toward the required 90 hours of Law course work. They may also count 8 hours of Law credit toward the 32 hours required for the M.S. degree
- Minimum GPA: 3.0

1 For additional details and requirements refer to the department’s Graduate Handbook (http://nres.illinois.edu/graduate/handbook) and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook).

**Non-Thesis Option**

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<td>Capstone Research Project</td>
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<td>NRES 505</td>
<td>Capstone Internship Experience</td>
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<td>NRES 507</td>
<td>Capstone Group Research Project</td>
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Requirements for the JD in Law

Total Hours: 102

**Other Requirements**

- Other requirements may overlap
- Minimum 500-level Hours Required Overall: 12
- Written final examination; preparation, presentation, oral exam, and approval of a capstone project report.

Students may count up to 12 hours of NRES course work toward the required 90 hours of Law course work. They may also count 8 hours of Law credit toward the 32 hours required for the M.S. degree

Minimum GPA: 3.0

1 For additional details and requirements refer to the department’s Graduate Handbook (http://nres.illinois.edu/graduate/handbook) and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook).

**Online M. S. Program**

The online M. S. graduate program in NRES enables students to continue their education in disciplines related to natural resources and environmental sciences through part-time study at locations away from the Urbana-Champaign campus. This program meets the needs of persons currently working or wanting to work in the areas of conservation, ecology, restoration ecology, soil science, sustainable development, urban ecology, urban forestry, urban wildlife management, and water resources management. Students can enroll in individual courses for professional and/or academic advancement, or apply for admission to the M.S. degree program. All online M.S. students are admitted to the non-thesis option, though, under certain conditions, a degree-seeking online student may petition the Department to transfer to the thesis option. Application deadlines and other important information are available at https://nres.illinois.edu/online/apply.

Master of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences - Online (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/graduate-majors/nres/ms-nres-onl)

Information listed in this catalog is current as of 12/2019