

# NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, MS AND LAW, JD

*for the degrees of Master of Science in Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences and Juris Doctor 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 a 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 Urbana-Champaign goes one step further, however, allowing students to supplement a law program with training in a related scientific field.

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

Applicants wishing to pursue the joint J.D./M.S. Program must apply to both the Illinois College of Law and the NRES graduate program for

the same semester. 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. 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 online (<https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/instructions/04c/>). 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 (<https://nres.illinois.edu/apply/>). 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
- plant ecology
- physiology and genetics
- quantitative and spatial methods
- restoration ecology
- soil science and conservation
- sustainability
- water/biogeochemistry
- wetland ecology

## Financial Aid

Several sources of financial aid are available within the department for the semesters in which the joint degree student has NRES as the primary curriculum:

- 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 faculty members working in the area of interest.

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

## Thesis Option

Code	Title	Hours
NRES 594	NRES Professional Orientation	1
LAW 616	Environmental Law and Pol I	3-4
LAW 618	Natural Resources	2-4
LAW 622	Land Use Planning	2-4
Research/Project/Independent Study Hours (Optional - min/max applied toward degree):		4-8
NRES 599	Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)	4-12
Requirements for the JD in Law		90
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>102</b>

## Other Requirements

Requirement	Description
Other requirements may overlap	
Minimum 500-level Hours Required	12
Overall:	
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

## Non-Thesis Option

Code	Title	Hours
NRES 594	NRES Professional Orientation	1
LAW 616	Environmental Law and Pol I	3-4
LAW 618	Natural Resources	2-4
LAW 622	Land Use Planning	2-4
Electives		11-21
Select one of the following:		3-8
NRES 503	Capstone Research Project	
NRES 505	Capstone Internship Experience	
Requirements for the JD in Law		90
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>102</b>

## Other Requirements

Requirement	Description
Other requirements may overlap	
Minimum 500-level Hours Required	12
Overall:	
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

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1. Mastery of core knowledge in major field of study and specialized knowledge related to concentration/specialization
2. Understanding the logic of science, including the philosophy of science and research design
3. Facility with research tools/techniques and data analysis techniques relevant for major and concentration/specialization
4. Strong communication skills in conversation, presentation, and writing, particularly scientific/technical writing
5. Ability to function well professionally, with good leadership skills, well-developed problem-solving abilities, and ethical thinking

## Graduate Degree Programs in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

- Graduate Majors:
  - Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, MS (on-campus & online) (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/aces/natural-resources-environmental-sciences-ms/>)
  - Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, PhD (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/aces/natural-resources-environmental-sciences-phd/>)
- Joint Degree Program:
  - Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, MS and Law, JD (p. 1)

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## Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences

Department Head: Robert Schooley ([schooley@illinois.edu](mailto:schooley@illinois.edu))  
 Director of Graduate Programs: Jeffrey Matthews ([jmatthew@illinois.edu](mailto:jmatthew@illinois.edu))

Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences Department website (<http://nres.illinois.edu/>)

Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences Department faculty (<https://nres.illinois.edu/directory/>)

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## College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences website (<https://aces.illinois.edu/>)

## Admissions

Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences Overview of Admissions & Requirements (<https://nres.illinois.edu/graduate/apply/>)  
 Graduate College Admissions & Requirements (<https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/>)