

Environmental Social Science, PhD

LAESSPHD

Explore complex social forces that shape how humans interact with the environment. This interdisciplinary degree incorporates planning, anthropology and economics to broaden your view of the factors surrounding environmental practice and facilitate new areas of innovation for a more sustainable future.

Program description

Degree awarded: PHD Environmental Social Science

The PhD program in environmental social science is one of the few doctoral degree programs in the U.S. that draw on the premise that reducing human impacts and developing more sustainable environmental practices are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve without a focus on the social dynamics of environmental issues using critical social science perspectives.

The program is organized around theoretically based conceptual domains:

- culture and the environment
- environmental hazards and vulnerability
- environmental justice
- human environment impacts
- political ecology
- science and technology studies

These are the bases for addressing various topical foci, including urban environments, technologies and their consequences, landscapes, institutions, and health and the environment.

Students work with faculty who have expertise in a broad range of fields, including:

- archaeology
- community resources
- cultural and medical anthropology
- demography
- environmental history
- geographic information systems
- human and physical geography

- planning
- public affairs
- science and technology studies
- sociology

Coursework for the degree is focused on developing practical skills and a solid grasp of complex social science approaches to environmental issues. Students work closely with their committee to develop a curriculum appropriate to their chosen interests and career goals.

At a glance

- **College/School:** [The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#)
- **Location:** [Tempe](#)

Degree requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

Students who enter the program with a master's degree in a related field may be granted up to 30 credit hours toward the 84 credit hour total required for the doctorate degree program. This leaves 54 credit hours of coursework, 12 credit hours of research credit and 12 hours of dissertation credit (54 credit hours total) to be earned after admission.

Students who enter the program without a master's degree must earn an additional 30 hours of graduate credit, produce a research portfolio that is formally evaluated by a faculty committee, and present that research in a public forum before continuing to the later stage of the doctorate degree program.

All students must maintain an average GPA of 3.20 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in their courses and complete degree requirements per the program's satisfactory progress policy.

Admission requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited institution. Undergraduate coursework in the social sciences (e.g., geography, political science, sociology, anthropology, planning or history) is not a prerequisite for admission but is

generally advisable. Students may be admitted without such a background and may be required to acquire knowledge of the social sciences in a manner to be specified at the time of admission.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program or a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. personal statement outlining educational and professional goals
4. current curriculum vitae or resume
5. three letters of recommendation
6. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information

An applicant whose native language is not English must provide [proof of English proficiency](#) regardless of their current residency.

Applicants may include in the application materials an optional scholarly writing sample, not to exceed 30 double-spaced pages.

Tuition information

When it comes to paying for higher education, everyone's situation is different. Students can learn about [ASU tuition and financial aid](#) options to find out which will work best for them.

Application deadlines

Fall

[expand](#)

Career opportunities

The program trains students to move into teaching and research positions or to assume leadership roles in government, industry or nongovernmental organizations.

There is a demand in the job market for people with keen thinking skills who can manage, evaluate and interpret large amounts of data. As the many spheres of human interaction expand globally, people trained in this degree program are increasingly sought-after for their broad, holistic knowledge and perspectives. Some career opportunities include:

- acting as legal advocates in international cases
- analyzing and proposing policies
- conducting postgraduate academic research

- consulting for private and public organizations
- curating cultural resources
- directing nonprofit organizations
- directing programs in the private or public sector
- managing culture or heritage resources in the private or public sector
- planning communities
- teaching

Contact information

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[Admission deadlines](#)