Environmental Social Science, PhD
LAESSPHD

Explore complex social forces shaping 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 draws on the premise that reducing human impacts and developing more sustainable environmental practices is 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

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

Coursework for the degree is focused on developing real-world 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 campus

Degree Requirements

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

Students entering 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 30 credit hours of coursework, 12 credit hours of research credit and 12 hours of dissertation credit (54 credit hours total) to be earned post-admission.

Students entering without a master's degree must earn an additional 30 hours of graduate credit, produce a research portfolio which is formally evaluated by a faculty committee and present that research in a public forum before continuing on in 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 applicants must have 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 current residency.

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

**Application Deadlines**

**Fall**

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**Career Opportunities**

The demand in the job market is 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 are increasingly sought 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 private or public sectors
• planning communities
• teaching

Contact Information

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Admission Deadlines