

Sustainability, MA

SUSUSTMA

Interested in investigating current and emerging global threats and their potential solutions? Collaborate with peers and faculty to generate new ideas and perform research in order to address critical sustainability challenges.

Program description

Degree awarded: MA Sustainability

The MA in sustainability is a research-oriented degree program that culminates with writing either a thesis or publishable scientific paper.

The program focuses on knowledge generation and investigating potential solutions to sustainability challenges and prepares students to design and conduct transdisciplinary research. Although the graduate degree programs emphasize the integration of a broad range of expertise, this program is best suited to students inclined toward transdisciplinary science, humanities, planning or related fields and who are interested in a career in research or academia.

Students learn how different disciplines view and approach the challenges of sustainability in theory, research and practice. They develop academic and technical skills as well as ethical insights that can help them understand, research and provide solutions to complex sustainability challenges at the local, regional, national and global levels.

All sustainability graduate students understand the need for a transdisciplinary approach to solving sustainability challenges; can communicate their work to professionals in other disciplines, to policymakers and to the general public; and have the breadth of vision to incorporate the interconnectedness of social, economic, environmental and technical systems into their research. They have the critical thinking skills necessary to approach sustainability challenges from a systems perspective, the ability to work effectively in interdisciplinary teams, and the technical skills to formulate and solve problems at the appropriate scale.

At a glance

- **College/School:** [College of Global Futures](#)
- **Location:** [Tempe](#)

Degree requirements

35 credit hours and a thesis, or

35 credit hours including the required capstone course (SOS 596)

Required Core (14 credit hours)

SOS 510 Perspectives on Sustainability (3)

SOS 520 Research Design and Methods for Sustainability (3)

SOS 525 Social-Ecological-Technical Systems: Domains and Interfaces (3)

SOS 581 Synthesis for Sustainability Research (3)

SOS 589 Community of Graduate Student Scholars (2)

Electives (15 credit hours)

methods (3)

normative dimensions of sustainability (3)

general electives (9)

Culminating Experience (6 credit hours)

SOS 596 Capstone: Scientific Paper (6) or

SOS 599 Thesis (6)

Additional Curriculum Information

The taught-course element of the program is evaluated through course-specific examinations, research papers or applied projects and is considered successfully completed if the student obtains a GPA of 3.25 or higher. Graduate College policies and procedures for fulfillment of degree requirements must also be met.

SOS 589 is a one-credit-hour course students take twice for two credit hours total.

Approved general elective subjects include the following:

SOS, ASB, ART, PAF, SGS, POS, SOC, PSB, PGS, PHI, COM, CPP, CRD, ESS, PGV, NTR, MCO, GCU, SCM, HPS, HST, JHR, JMC, JUS, LAW, LES, PUP, SBS, RTM, STS, TDM, URB

Admission requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the College of Global Futures.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree in any field from a regionally accredited institution.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 (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. statement of intent
4. three letters of recommendation
5. resume or curriculum vitae
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.

The statement of intent should not exceed 600 words and should describe how the applicant's background will contribute to success in the program and describe how completion of the degree will support long-term career goals. The statement should elaborate on key research questions the applicant wishes to address or problems to solve as part of the plan of study, and it should identify potential faculty advisors.

Letters of recommendation must be from three people who can attest to the applicant's academic and professional achievements. At least one letter should be academic in nature.

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](#)

Global opportunities

Global experience

Studying abroad is encouraged for graduate students. Nearly all of the College of Global Futures faculty-directed programs offer graduate credit. In addition, the Global Education Office offers more than 50 program opportunities, with programs on every continent.

Faculty-directed programs tend to be the best fit for graduate students; taking courses with ASU professors over the summer or during academic breaks offers students close mentorship and professional network growth in many fields of study while they earn ASU credit. Exchange program participation is also possible with careful planning.

Students can find programs specific to their interests on the [College of Global Futures Study Abroad webpage](#), and additional opportunities and information on the [ASU Global Education Office website](#). These sites also include additional information about applying for funding to support global travel.

Graduate students are also encouraged to apply for funding for international research, study and professional development through ASU's [Lorraine W. Frank Office of National Scholarships Advisement](#).

Career opportunities

Professionals with expertise in sustainability frameworks, interdisciplinary research and strong research skills are in high demand across industries, including business, academia and government. Skills in critical thinking, teamwork, sustainability problem-solving and research are valuable to businesses and institutions burdened by sustainability problems.

From the School of Sustainability's 2022 alumni employment survey, 100% of master's degree program respondents are either employed or pursuing continuing education. Of those employed, 100% of respondents have jobs directly related to sustainability.

Career opportunities for graduates of this program include:

- chief sustainability officer
- conservation program lead
- disaster relief manager
- environmental restoration planner
- program director or manager
- research associate
- sustainability communications specialist
- sustainability instructor or teacher
- sustainability specialist
- zero waste consultant

Contact information

[School of Sustainability](#) | WCPH 3rd floor
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[Admission deadlines](#)