

# Overview of PhD Program

## Program Overview

To earn a PhD in Environmental Studies, students must complete 30 hours of coursework plus an additional 30 hours of dissertation credit hours. In addition to the coursework requirements, students must successfully complete the major milestones outlined below.

1. **Guidance Committee Meeting** - During the first six weeks of a new student's first semester, a guidance committee of at least three faculty members will examine a student's past course record (from undergraduate and past graduate work) and devise a program of coursework for that student.
2. **Preliminary Examination** - This written exam tests a student's understanding of material from the ENVS core classes, as well as the breadth and depth of their knowledge in their chosen fields of inquiry. The preliminary exam is typically taken in the student's fourth or fifth semester.
3. **Prospectus Defense** - The prospectus defense is designed to evaluate a student's dissertation research plan. At the prospectus defense meeting, the committee also will review the student's completion of coursework assigned in previous committee meetings. The prospectus defense should be scheduled in the student's fifth or sixth semester.
4. **Dissertation Defense**. A doctoral student writes a dissertation based upon original investigation and showing mature scholarship and critical judgment as well as familiarity with tools and methods of research. The defense consists of both a public presentation and a closed door meeting with the committee.