

Summary of Major ENVS MS and PhD Program Milestones and Deadlines

We recognize that ENVS is a diverse department, and students may require more or less time to complete their degree depending on their teaching and research commitments. We encourage students to progress more quickly where possible and to request an extension as needed. Please work with your advisor to develop a timeline given your research interests, prior training, and funding availability.

MS Program

Milestone	Deadline
Thesis proposal	Before the start of the student's third semester
Thesis defense	By the end of the 4 th semester

PhD Program

Milestone	Deadline
Preliminary exam	By the end of the student's 4 th semester in the program
Prospectus defense	By the end of the student's 6 th semester in the program
Dissertation defense	By the end of the student's 5 th year in the program

For students who acquire an MS on the way to a PhD

Milestone	Deadline
Thesis proposal	Before the start of the student's third semester
Thesis defense	By the end of the 4 th semester
Preliminary exam	By the end of the student's 6 th semester in the program
Prospectus defense	By the end of the student's 8 th semester in the program
Dissertation defense	By the end of the student's 6 th year in the program (Graduate School Policy)

Adjustments to this timeline

- For all deadlines listed above, a faculty member or student (with their advisor's support) may petition the Graduate Committee for an extension. A failure to meet these deadlines without an extension will result in removal from the program. To do so, you should submit a short letter to the director of graduate studies, with your advisor cc'd, that explains and justifies your request.
- Please note that according to Graduate School policy, a student must petition the Dean of the Graduate School to extend their MS thesis defense date beyond four years and their dissertation defense date beyond six years from the semester that they are admitted.
- Faculty and students may petition to move up (make earlier) a deadline by one semester. This decision should be formalized at the time of the student's first semester guidance committee meeting with a letter from the advisor to the director of graduate studies, and should be noted on the guidance committee form. Faculty who are considering enforcing a faster timeline should discuss their expectations with the student when they are accepted into the program.