

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint current and future MENV students with CU Boulder's Masters of the Environment (MENV) program's policies, guidance, procedures, and resources. This handbook was prepared based on policies in place at the time of publication and, therefore, all information is subject to change without notice or obligation. Please be aware that our program continues to evolve and specific policies may be altered, thus, the information in this handbook may not always be current. This publication is for informational purposes only and is not comprehensive. Instead, vital information is presented and when necessary, the handbook will refer to other publications that provide more detailed information. Thus, the handbook does not constitute a contract with MENV or the University of Colorado Boulder, either expressed or implied. Students are encouraged to utilize a variety of resources and subject matter experts across campus for additional information.

Graduate students in MENV should read this Handbook, the [Graduate School Rules](#), and review other resources via the [Graduate School's Policies and Procedures website](#). It is the responsibility of the student to know how and comply with all current rules, deadlines, policies, and procedures.

Program Overview

Program Overview & Requirements

MENV is an interdisciplinary professional graduate degree program that equips students to address complex environmental challenges and prepares them to become leaders in a wide range of careers in the environment, energy, natural resources, and sustainability fields. Students take courses that equip them to solve real-world environmental and natural resource problems, and to understand how various stakeholders can be engaged effectively in the decision-making process.

The program is a 21-month, cohort-based, on-campus professional degree program designed for new and early career professionals. The program focuses on applications, problem-solving, and has four components:

1. the core curriculum;
2. a choice of topical specializations, that are supported by
3. electives; and,
4. a Capstone Project.

Minimum Requirements

- Students must successfully complete forty-eight (48) credit hours of academic work with 24 months. Students are required to take nine (9) credits of required MENV Core Courses.
- Students are required to complete twelve (12) credits of Specialization courses.

- Students are required to complete nine (9) credits of Capstone courses and project work to successfully meet Capstone Project requirements.
- Students must supplement the required Core, Specialization, and Capstone requirements with electives of their choice to meet the 48-credit requirement.

Considerations

- Up to six (6) credit hours of elective credit may be taken at the undergraduate level (3000/4000 level *only*) with prior approval.
- Up to (9) credit hours of graduate course work may be transferred from outside the program with prior approval from MENV & the Graduate School.
- Students may petition to extend or condense the program duration time.
- Students should familiarize themselves with the [Graduate School Rules](#) and see the [Academic Procedures](#) in the MENV Student Handbook for additional information and requirements.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Educate students to advance sustainability solutions across a wide-range of environmental careers and sectors by promoting a community of learning through engaged and interdisciplinary classes with real-world professional experience.

Vision

MENV provides environmental leaders with the knowledge, skills and experiences necessary to understand a changing world and build a more just, sustainable, and productive planet.

Values

- We drive thought leadership to address and respond to the dynamism and transformative change in society and the environment.
- We have moved beyond traditional instruction, incorporating experiential and professional opportunities that prepare students to address real-world environmental challenges.
- We embrace a paradigm of environmental education that values leadership, systems-based approaches, experiential learning, and problem solving.
- We recognize that environmental challenges transcend traditional sectors and professions, and therefore provide our students with the knowledge and skills to succeed in new and emergent fields.

- We leverage the environmental ethic and culture of innovation of Colorado's Front Range and engage a wide range of stakeholders to create an active community of learning.
- We celebrate diversity and inclusiveness as fundamental to address the greatest challenges of the environment and society.

Admissions

Requirements

To be considered for the MENV program, students must have a four-year bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. institution or the international equivalent. We recommend a minimum of one year of professional experience or applicable training prior to applying. The MENV program selects students who we believe will achieve academic and professional success while adding value to our graduate community. The MENV selects the most talented and diverse candidates through a holistic review of the application materials. Decisions are based on academic and professional backgrounds, as well as individuals' potential to contribute both inside and outside of the classroom.

Admission/Acceptance

The [Application Process](#) is outlined here. Applications are reviewed by a committee comprised of MENV staff and faculty. All applications are reviewed independently by at least two reviewers. Applicants who apply by the priority deadline can expect to hear a decision within two months. Applicants who apply after the priority deadline are reviewed on a rolling basis until the final application deadline or until the cohort is filled. Once the cohort is filled, remaining applicants are placed on a waitlist and will be notified if any seats open in the incoming cohort. Accepted applicants must respond to their offer of admission by mid-April or their seat may be given to a waitlisted candidate.

Student Expectations

As a professional master's program, MENV students are expected to participate, engage, and behave in the program in a professional manner. As the MENV Program continues to grow and evolve, students should expect to do the same. Students should recognize that with any program which aims to be market-reactive, there will be growing pains, limited resources, and significant learning curves. The MENV Program holds its students, faculty, and staff to high standards of professionalism, respect, and empathy.

Professionalism

MENV students are expected to behave and conduct business in a professional manner, which includes:

- Showing up to meetings and classes on time
- Turning in assignments that are complete and meet faculty/client expectations

- Treating clients, colleagues, and co-workers with respect
- Following MENV, Graduate School, and UCB internal codes, guidelines, and policies
- Communicating and writing in a professional tone/manner

Some students will come into the program with extensive professional experience and others with limited experience. MENV welcomes this as an additional learning opportunity for those looking to refine their professional skills and those who are learning to operate professionally for the first time. MENV will push everyone to behave like professionals. Just like in a traditional work place, MENV students who fail to behave professionally will likely not thrive in the program.

Different than a Traditional Master's Program

MENV differs from a traditional Master's of Science or Master's of Arts programs in that it views the cultivation of marketable skills through application as central to the educational experience. MENV appreciates that many students are here because they want skills and a promise of ample opportunities to hone the "hard" and "soft" skills that they need to advance into an environmental career of their choosing. However, students that are purely seeking skills should determine if this is the right program for them, as opposed to seeking out a certificate. MENV works to pair skills with knowledge in an applied context to create sustainable change and set MENV students apart and position them as high-potential emergent leaders. It is a tremendous advantage of MENV that the program has instructors that are experts in their field joining us from practice. With this advantage comes a trade-off where students will not have 100% dedicated instructors and advisors. It is critical for students recognize what it means for an instructor to teach from practice. MENV appreciates that this amount of unpredictability and course agility may feel unfamiliar, but it is something students must get used to, because these are the realities of the working world.

Honing Leadership Skills in Times of Uncertainty

To navigate and thrive in our in-flux environment, on a crowded planet, and in pluralistic societies, students must build a high degree of comfort with uncertainty and an orientation towards adaptation. In offering the opportunity to become an emergent leader, MENV is going to place you in situations that push you outside your comfort zone. This is to say that MENV will not insulate you from the instability you will encounter in your careers and adult lives. To the contrary, the uncertainty is by design – this is how you will learn to lead through change.

Try, Fail, Reflect, and Grow

As students enter and begin to adapt to a new program, new community, and new knowledge, they will stumble, fall, and fail. Students will also achieve, meet, and exceed expectations. This is a safe and supportive space where MENV students can experiment. Faculty will support students as they come up with bold ideas and try to actualize them. The MENV Team will help students reflect on what they have missed, challenge students on what they could have done differently and what could have produced

more desirable results. Students should recognize they have room to both succeed and fail and should get in the habit of reflecting, regardless of the outcome.

Embrace the Discomfort of Growth

Learning is not always comfortable and does not always allow for a linear progression. Sometimes, students may feel adrift and overwhelmed by the amount of work they have to do, the new information to absorb, or the number of things they want to do with their newly acquired knowledge. MENV implores students to be patient with the learning process, to have patience with the journey, and to lean into the discomfort and learn to welcome it as a sign of growth.

Advising

The MENV program offers a significant amount of advising resources ranging from academic, professional, and Capstone guidance. As a recipient of advising, it is important to articulate the objectives, expectations, and desired learning outcomes at each advising meeting. MENV provides the following general guidelines of “best practices” in establishing faculty/student expectations in advising.

Advisees are expected to:

- Be open to exploration and approach challenges with a willingness to grow and learn.
- Prepare for advising appointments by researching opportunities and resources in advance and be ready to discuss interests and goals.
- Be familiar with CU Boulder policies, procedures, and resources.
- Read and respond to official university correspondence in a timely manner using your @colorado.edu email account.
- Engage with your advisor on a regular basis.
- Accept responsibility for their academic success and work with their advisor throughout the MENV program.
- Utilize CU websites and search engines to find answers and come prepared to discuss issues that are unable to be resolved independently.

Academic Procedures & Policies

Academic Calendar

The [Office of the Registrar](#) maintains and publishes the [Academic Calendar](#) for all standard classes. The Academic Calendar is the main resource for important dates and deadlines for all things related to course registration, add/drop, withdrawing, financial aid, tuition, bill due dates, and required documentation. Dates and deadlines can also be found in student [Buff Portal accounts](#).

Academic Standing

To remain in good academic standing, MENV students must make timely progress towards degree completion. They must also meet the standards of scholarship established by UCB, the Graduate School, and the MENV Program. These standards include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. If a student's GPA drops below 3.0 for one semester, they will be placed on Academic Probation. More information on academic probation can be found in the [Graduate School Rules](#).
- Limiting unfinished coursework. Excessive unfinished coursework is defined as more than nine credits of incomplete grades on a student's transcript.
- Completing the degree on schedule. Students are expected to complete the MENV degree in 24-months, unless a petition is approved by the MENV Faculty Director (see section on Non-Traditional Students).

Auditing a Course

Admitted degree students, either enrolled or suspended, are not permitted to audit courses. If an admitted degree student is interested in participating in a class without receiving credit, the student must enroll in the course for 'no credit. Courses taken for no credit have the same tuition rate as courses taken for credit.

Capstone Handbook

The MENV Capstone Project is the central pillar of the University of Colorado Boulder's graduate program in environmental management. It is an interdisciplinary team project in which students work closely with external sponsoring organizations, called Capstone Partners, to propose innovative solutions to real-world environmental and sustainability challenges that partners face. Students can find the most [updated version of the Capstone Handbook here](#).

Change of Specialization

A student may change specializations with approvals from the Specialization Lead and the MENV Director, *up until the end of the second week of classes in their first semester* in the program. After this date, changes may still be approved upon review, but will likely extend the time required for the student to graduate beyond 24-months. To request a specialization change, students must:

1. Discuss changing specializations with the current Specialization Lead.
2. Discuss the desire to switch with the potential new Specialization Lead.
3. [Submit a MENV Petition Form outlining the request](#).
4. Once the change is approved, the student will be notified and the student's sub-plan will be changed in the student's enrollment records.

Course Capacity

MENV seeks to accommodate all MENV students who would like to take a MENV course (core, specialization, or Capstone sequence). Students will be able to take core and Capstone courses according to the MENV curricular schedule. Some MENV courses, however, may have limited enrollments. If a course is full, students can be [waitlisted](#) or contact the instructor of record to see if an exception can be made. Courses that are not a part of the MENV curriculum, such as elective taken from other departments, may have enrollment limits, prerequisites, and approval processes that are not under MENV control. Contact the corresponding department and/or instructor of record to discuss any enrollment questions or concerns.

Course Materials

Required readings and books will be determined by the instructor and clearly laid out in the course syllabus. While instructors will make an effort to distribute the syllabus to enrolled students in advance of the class, this is not always possible. Similarly, instructors will, when possible, provide a list of readings or books that students can purchase in advance of the start of the class. Electronic readings and other materials will be posted to CU Boulder's online education management platform. Students should inquire with the instructor as to the best source from which to acquire required readings.

Course Registration

Students will register for courses using the Buff Portal during the following times:

- Your assigned enrollment dates
- The open enrollment period
- More information on course registration (adding a class, dropping a class, waitlists, etc.) can be found on the [Office of the Registrar](#) website.

Dismissal from the Program

Violation of University of Colorado, University of Boulder, Graduate School, or MENV policies may result in dismissal from the MENV program. Students are bound to CU Boulder's [Honor Code](#), as well as policies concerning [harassment and discrimination](#). Final determination of dismissal from the MENV program shall be made by the MENV Director, pursuant to CU Boulder policies and procedures. Student appeals of this process can be made according to the [Graduate School Grievance Policy](#).

Dual Degree: MENV-MBA

MENV and the Leeds School of Business have launched the MENV/MBA dual degree. MENV's partnership with Colorado's top MBA program (and top 10 entrepreneurship program in the nation) will provide dual degree-seeking students with unparalleled learning opportunities within the living laboratory of Boulder, Denver, and the Front Range. MENV and Leeds' MBA are programs where students will form deep connections with the nationally-recognized and innovative Boulder business

community and leading-edge environmental and sustainability professionals. Combined coursework will emphasize innovation, social impact, and sustainability and leverage the strengths of each program. [Program details and application procedures can be found here.](#)

Grades

[University of Colorado Boulder Graduate School policy](#) requires that all graduate students must earn at least a C in all courses to receive a Master's degree. If a MENV student receives less than this grade, the student must repeat the course the following year to graduate from the MENV program. There are no exceptions to this requirement. There are no other courses that can substitute for core or specialization requirements. Specific requirements for curricular performance will be provided by course instructors.

- Core Courses: MENV students who do not receive the minimum acceptable grade must retake the core course.
- Required Specialization Courses: MENV students who do not receive the minimum acceptable grade must retake the required specialization course or if there are options within the specialization, another required specialization course. Regardless of whether a specialization course is retaken, or a different specialization course is taken in its place, the student must ultimately receive satisfactory grades for the minimum number of courses required for that specialization.
- Electives: Failure to receive the MENV minimum acceptable grade for an elective will require that the student either retakes the elective or take another in its place.
- Capstone Project: Students who do not receive the minimum acceptable grade for their Capstone Project course must complete a new Capstone Project.

Graduation Process

- *Application for Admission to Candidacy:* The courses taken to fulfill MENV graduation requirements will be listed in [this form](#). Three signatures are necessary before submitting the form to the Graduate School where all information will be verified against your records. Master's degree students must submit this form no later than the [posted graduation deadlines](#) listed by the Graduate School.
- *Online Graduation Application:* Students must [apply online through the Buff Portal](#) in order to graduate. This notifies the Graduate School and MENV that the student intends to graduate, and it provides necessary information to the Registrar's Office for ordering and shipping diplomas. Students must apply to graduate online whether or not they plan to attend the ceremony.
- *Deadlines:* To be eligible to earn an advanced degree, students must fulfill appropriate requirements as established by their major department and the Graduate School and have an

approved Candidacy Application. Students should submit paperwork to the MENV Graduate Program Coordinator first, to allow time for review, before Graduate School Deadlines. Procedures and deadlines required by the Graduate School can be found on the Master Deadlines [website](#).

- *Master Graduation Checklist:* The [Master Graduation Checklist](#) is intended to be used as a supplement to information obtained from the University Catalog, the Schedule of Courses, the major department, and as an aid to preparing degree plans for master students.

Incompletes

Grade of Incomplete or “I” grades are discouraged, but an Incomplete may be assigned when all of the following conditions are met:

- The student asks the professor for the incomplete grade
- The student is unable to complete the coursework for reasons beyond his/her control
- The student has completed >50% of the course work

If the request is granted, the instructor sets the conditions whereby the course work will be completed. The instructor and student will sign a MOU to agree upon the arrangement in which the incomplete will be fulfilled. Work for incomplete grade must be completed within one year. The timeframe and plan for completion must be included in the MOU. Grades for incomplete must be submitted on a Change of Record Form, signed by the professor, and submitted before the grading period ends at the end of the semester. If an “I” grade is not submitted before this deadline, an Incomplete will convert to an “F.”

Leave of Absence

Graduate students must [apply for a leave of absence](#) if they withdraw from or do not enroll in classes for a Fall or Spring semester. Graduate students who do not apply for a leave of absence and fail to enroll in classes will be discontinued and must reapply to the UCB in order to return. More information on taking a leave of absence from UCB can be found through the [Office of the Registrar](#). If you are called to military active duty, please see [Procedures for Students Ordered to Active Duty](#). A leave of absence is not required for summer semester; graduate students not taking summer classes are still considered active students.

Non-Traditional Student

MENV students who wish to extend or condense the 24-months to complete the program are referred to as ‘non-traditional’ students. MENV has developed a framework to construct a curricular structure for non-traditional students to successfully complete the program in an identified time span that is greater or less than 24-months. Students must submit a petition and complete an MOU that includes a curriculum plan agreed upon by both the student and the MENV Director.

Petition of MENV Policies and/or Program

In the event a student would like to request an exception of any MENV policy or procedure, they must submit a MENV Petition Form. Please contact Bobbie.Jones@colorado.edu to request the MENV Petition Form.

The following requests require a petition:

- Change of Specialization
- Non-Traditional Student request (to extend or condense program duration)
- Take <9 or >15 credit hours in a semester
- Waive a required core or specialization course
- Drop or add a course after college or university deadlines
- Credit transfers to be counted towards degree requirements

No Credit and Pass/Fail

Course work to be applied toward an advanced degree may not be taken for no credit (NC). Courses taken for no credit cannot be used toward the minimum credit load requirement for full-time or half-time status. No coursework that is to be applied toward an advanced degree may be taken pass/fail.

Readmittance to Program

Students who have been enrolled in a degree-seeking program at CU Boulder but are no longer eligible to register for classes must reapply [following these steps on the Admissions website](#). A regular degree student who is dismissed for failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA is eligible to apply for readmission after one year. Approval or rejection of this application rests jointly with the student's major department and the Dean of the Graduate School. The final decision will be made by the Dean based on the recommendations of the department.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal regulations require that all students make [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#) in a program of study to maintain eligibility for financial aid. SAP include meeting the minimum GPA requirements for the MENV program, completing 67% of all attempted course work and completing the MENV degree within 150% of the standard program length. A corrective action plan may be put into place between the MENV Director, Specialization Lead, and student in question to make recommendations regarding retention and program continuation. It is the responsibility of the student to be as proactive as possible in tracking their academic progress towards meeting graduation requirements. Student should seek out

the necessary resources to ensure academic progress is being made within the timeframe and requirements set by the program.

Time Limit for Completion of Degree

Master's degree students have four years from the semester in which they are admitted and begin course work to complete all degree requirements. Students may request an extension of the time limit through a formal request and planning process. More information can be found in the [Graduate School Rules](#).

Transfer of Credits

Transfer credit is defined as any credit earned at another accredited institution, credits earned on another campus of the CU system, or credits earned as a non-degree student within the CU system. Students may transfer up to nine semester hours from an accredited university. The courses must be graduate level, and students must have obtained a grade of "B" or better on all work being considered for transfer, and the courses cannot have been used toward a bachelor's degree or graduate degree.

Students must submit the following documents to the Graduate Program Coordinator to obtain approvals and for processing:

1. [Request for Transfer of Credit Form](#)
2. MENV Petition (request from Bobbie.Jones@colorado.edu)
3. Course Syllabus (if available)

Typically, transfer credits only qualify as electives, however, in rare circumstances, credits may meet the requirements of select MENV core courses. Graduate School policy indicates the transfer of credits from other accredited institutions are not included in the calculation of a student's GPA.

Waiving a Course

MENV students may sometimes be interested in seeking a waiver from required courses because they may have a background or expertise in a particular course topic. Generally, the program discourages students from waiving courses because the curriculum has been developed in a structured manner.

MENV students must still take a minimum of 48 credits to graduate from the MENV Program. As a result, any course that is waived must be replaced by an alternate that is approved by MENV Administration. Students interested in seeking a course waiver should reach out to an [Academic Advisor](#).

Withdrawal from the Program

To withdraw from the MENV program, student should first contact an [Academic Advisor](#) to discuss alternative options. Graduate students must sign up for a [leave of absence](#) if they plan on returning to

the program. If you do not sign up for a leave of absence, you will be discontinued. More information on withdrawing from the University can be found through the [Office of the Registrar](#).

Graduate School Resources

The University of Colorado, in conjunction with the Graduate School, offer a variety of resources to MENV students, faculty, and staff, to make their time in the MENV the best it can be. The services and tools the University of Colorado and the Graduate School provide will help every individual better navigate campus, tricky situations, and understand the processes, policies, and procedures that keep a University up and running.

Graduate education is a preeminent role of the University of Colorado at Boulder. The responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating graduate programs and graduate education policies and procedures rests within the Graduate School. The mission of the Graduate School is to facilitate and enhance the educational experiences and opportunities for all graduate students and to encourage excellence in research, creative and scholarly work.

Rules for CU Boulder's Graduate School can be found on the Graduate School [website](#) and within the CU Boulder Graduate School Rules [document](#).

Academic Misconduct & Honor Code Violations

The purpose of the Honor Code at the University of Colorado Boulder is to secure an environment where academic integrity can flourish. The Honor Code recognizes the importance of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility and aims to instill these principles as essential features of the University of Colorado Boulder campus. The Honor Code allows all students to have responsibility for, and the ability to attain, appropriate recognition for their academic and personal achievements.

Cases involving academic dishonesty are heard under the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code are acts of academic dishonesty and include but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying to course instructors, lying to representatives of the Honor Code, bribery or threats pertaining to academic matters, gaining unauthorized access to protected academic information, or an attempt to do any of the aforementioned violations. A student accused of academic dishonesty will either accept the accusation or request a hearing before a student panel, who will decide on the accusation of academic dishonesty. In addition to academic sanctions imposed by the faculty, students found guilty of academic dishonesty also face consequences from the Honor Code Council ranging from attending a mandatory class in ethics to expulsion from the campus.

Student Honor Code and Procedures can be found [here](#) with additional information available within the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution [website](#).

Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

In conjunction with CU Boulder's Graduate School, the United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS), the Boulder Faculty Assembly, as well as numerous other governing and advisory bodies on the Boulder Campus, a [Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#) was established. The University seeks to provide and sustain an environment conducive to sharing, extending, and critically examining knowledge and values, and to furthering understanding. Effective performance of this mission requires that University graduate students be free within their respective fields of competence to learn, research, and teach in accordance with appropriate standards of scholarly inquiry. Graduate student rights and responsibilities rest on their unique role as students, researchers, and teachers.

Discrimination and Harassment

The MENV Program is dedicated to creating an inclusive and safe environment for all members of the MENV community. This includes students, student workers, TAs, instructors, and staff, among others. The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to preventing and [eliminating discrimination and harassment](#) based on race, color, national origin, pregnancy, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. [CU Boulder's Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#) is charged with providing information and supporting members of the CU Boulder community on issues regarding discrimination and harassment.

Faculty and staff are, per CU Boulder's policies, mandatory reporters. As a result, while all matters concerning discrimination and harassment will be treated with discretion, MENV faculty and staff are required to report any incidents reported to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.

Grievance Process and Procedures

The Graduate School Grievance Process and Procedures establishes and describes the process through which graduate students can communicate concerns related to academic issues or academic conflicts, with the goal of ensuring that the student filing a grievance is better able to achieve academic success. This is a non-adversarial, non-judicial process. The rules of evidence, and any other rules that typically govern a criminal or civil court, are not applicable to the Grievance Procedure.

To access the Graduate Student Grievance Process and Procedures document, click [here](#).